THE AUSTRALIAN
WOMEN'S WEEKLY

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Vol. II. No. 38. Registered at the General Post Office, Sydney, for transmission by post as a newspaper. SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1935. SYDNEY

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OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Marion

P. Duncan-Brown.

Marion's creed is the out-of-doors,
The sun and the summer sky,
The whitened crests of the purling waves
And the ships that are passing by.

Beauty is hers as a gift from God,
And youth He has lent us all;
But our lives like ships are ours to steer—
We may rise on the tides or fall.

Marion, child of the out-of-doors,
A vessel of sweetest laughter,
May life's richest gold be always yours,
When its autumn follows after.

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WOMEN *Passed Over in* PUBLIC SERVICE

Striking examples of how promotions are withheld by the authorities!

By Our Special Commissioner

Why are obstacles put in the way of Australian women who are employed in our public services? Why are opportunities for advancement withheld?

Two women have recently fought successful battles on behalf of their sex, and their example should be an encouragement to others in their fight for equal consideration when promotions are being made.

Though much has been said and written about the advance of women into man's domain, the biggest field of all—the Civil Service—is largely a masculine preserve, so far as the higher-paid positions are concerned.

THERE are thousands more women in the employ of Australian Governments now than there were prior to 1914. Not only have they increased in numbers, but in ratio to their male colleagues. But the higher positions remain shut against them.

Two Queensland women have recently been fighting the battle of their sex in that State. One of them, a clerk in the income tax branch, challenged the promotion over her head of a male colleague with less experience. Her appeal came before the Queensland Appeals Board on February 1, and after a lengthy hearing the board decided in her favor. Her appointment to the job held by the man has been recommended by the board to the Public Service Commissioner.

Another Victory

A [illegible] was heard in Brisbane later. In this instance a woman member of the [illegible] Advances Corporation [illegible] a local position who appealed against the appointment of a man to take over her job.

In this case it was shown that the appellant, Miss Nolan, had been doing the work efficiently for 11 years, and that she had continued to do it since the position was classified last November. Because the Queensland Government has a declared policy of not appointing women to qualified positions, Miss Nolan was stood down, and a man who had never done the work was appointed.

Here, also, the appeal was upheld.

In spite of these two notable successes, the battle for sex equality in the Civil Service of Australia, whether State or Federal, is far from won.

If a woman wants to enter the Civil Service she must begin on the lowest rung of the ladder. And she is lucky, indeed, if she ever gets above the level of a typist's job.

Librarian and Inspector

A WOMAN Inspector of schools, Miss Julia Flynn, was given the position of Chief Inspector of Schools in Victoria a year or two ago. But the spectacle of a woman holding such a job was too much for the male "heads," who did not cease their outcries until the Government had displaced Miss Flynn by a male Chief Inspector, whose term of service was much less than hers.

Two or three years ago long service and unquestioned ability obtained for Miss Leason, in Sydney, the position of Chief Librarian of the Mitchell Library. Though promotion to the post was recognised as thoroughly well earned, the male opposition had something in reserve. Mrs. Linda Littlejohn, that courageous fighter for women's rights, told the story at a farewell gathering in her honor last week.

Mrs. Littlejohn said:

"Miss Leason was recommended by the Library Appointments Committee for the position of Chief Mitchell Librarian. That position was second in command in the State, the highest position being that of Chief Librarian.

"The Premier held up the appointment for many months, because he did not wish a woman to have the Mitchell Library appointment, as it would have meant that the holder of that position would automatically become Chief Librarian for N.S.W. when the Principal Librarian retired. The Premier did not wish a woman to be eventually Chief Librarian.

"However, public opinion was so strong that he was obliged to appoint Miss Leason Mitchell Librarian, but," added Mrs. Littlejohn, "he cuchred us after all! In order to prevent her ever becoming Chief Librarian, he created a new position, that of Deputy Chief Librarian, and to that position he appointed a man who had also been an applicant for the Mitchell Librarian position, but had not been considered as capable as Miss Leason.

"At present this man is visiting America on a Carnegie grant in order to inquire into libraries — a privilege and an educational opportunity that ought to honestly have fallen to Miss Leason!"

Theoretically, the Civil Service of Australia is open to women as to men. But there is a high wall of prejudice to be broken down before sex equality in this field is a real thing.

IN every State a certain number of girls are taken on each year. They have to pass a qualifying examination or have a "Leaving" or "Intermediate" Certificate. They are engaged as "temporary assistants." This means that they are not in any permanent or classified position; they may spend years at the desk, and be dispensed with at short notice.

They are not considered when executive positions are being handed out. All the "plums" are for men.

In most of the States the age at which girls are engaged for the Public Service is between 16 and 18. The commencing pay ranges from 22/- per week to £2 a week (minimum) and £2/9/- (maximum) on reaching 21, with slight variations in various States according to the cost of living.

MISS E. M. NOLAN, the young Queensland woman who has set a precedent in Australia by appealing against the promotion of a man over her head in the Public Service.

—Noel Mallison.

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BEAUTIFUL GIRLS *Tricked ... and* EXECUTED!

Dreadful Fate Revealed in New German Horror

By Beam Wireless from MURIEL SEGAL, Our Special Representative in Europe.

LONDON, Tuesday.

Two beautiful German aristocrats are believed to have been executed as spies at dawn to-day. No definite information is obtainable except that certain spies have been executed.

One was the beautiful Baroness Benita von Berg and the other Fraulein von Netzner. Two typists have also been sentenced to life imprisonment.

The Australian Women's Weekly is able to reveal the amazing drama behind the sentence.

ALL these women have been in the power of Chevalier Sosnowski, a rich, handsome, Polish baron, whose fascination for women is almost legendary.

He entertained lavishly, staging during parties and exercising his strange power over young girls, daughters of high military officials, who became his dupes.

All were accused of high treason and the betrayal of military secrets.

They risked their lives, not for money, but because they were madly in love with Sosnowski.

Sosnowski himself will not die.

He will probably be exchanged for a German prisoner in Poland.

The amazing part of the drama lies in the fact that girls who resisted Sosnowski's charms were blackmailed into his services by Baroness von Berg.

Hectic Parties

SHE invited prominent society girls to hectic parties in her luxurious apartments. After pungent cocktails and doped dainties the Baroness took flashlight pictures of victims in compromising circumstances as the wild night progressed.

Then, under threat of exposure the poor little rich girl was a slave in the spies' hands.

The affair was brought to light by a typist at the Reichswehr Ministry wearing such expensive clothes that her mother thanked her chief for his generosity to her daughter. This awakened the chief's suspicions, and the girl was tracked to the spies' lair. They were supplying the clothes in exchange for information.

Execution of the spies was performed following Hitler's refusal to exercise his prerogative of mercy. It is now revealed that Benita von Falkenhayn was divorced by her husband, Baron von Berg, during her imprisonment in order to enable her to marry Sosnowski.

This marriage, it was hoped, would spare her the death sentence.

Both blonde beauties, it is believed, were executed in the cold dawn light to the prison courtyard, where a double hearse waited.

What's Wrong With Mr. Weaver?

Read his own exclusive statement to The Australian Women's Weekly.

It's on Page 23.

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Let's Talk Of Interesting People

PRISONER OF NAZIS

ISOBEL LILIAN STEELE, a twenty-four-year-old violin student who had been pursuing her studies abroad, recently embarked in the President Harding on her return trip to her American home.

Miss Steele returned to the U.S.A. after harrowing experiences that started with her arrest in Berlin.

She was thrown into a Nazi prison camp, and remained there for four months while authorities tried to prove espionage charges against her.

—Morris Luke.

LIAISON OFFICER

DR. RANDALL COLYER, of Cronulla, N.S.W., will shortly leave for Canada, where she will act as liaison officer for the Women's Union of Service. This union, which was active during the war, was revived a year ago, and deals with questions affecting the welfare of women as citizens.

Dr. Colyer will, after her visit to Canada, travel to Hongkong, where she will attend the British Industrial Trade Fair. With this in mind, she has spent much time collecting films and exhibits which show Australian industries, and the attractions in general of Australia for tourists.

Dr. Colyer has more than once been delegate to the Pan-Pacific Conferences.

AUSTRALIAN NOVELIST

STELLA MILES FRANKLIN, better known as Miles Franklin, is an Australian novelist of world-wide fame, who has now returned after many years abroad to her home in Carlton, N.S.W. She has just joined the Fellowship of Australian Writers, which is at the moment busily making plans for Authors' Week in April.

Miss Franklin's first novel, "My Brilliant Career," was published in 1901. She then became treasurer and secretary of the Women's National Trade Union League of America, and editor of the league's magazine.

She has written three other novels, "Old Blastus of Bandicoot" being perhaps the most popular. Although Miss Franklin has not made any official statement about it, many people believe that the much-admired author whose pen-name is "Brent of Binbin" is also in reality Miss Franklin.

MAN'S IDEA *of* WOMAN'S PLACE in *"Perfect"* WORLDS

How the Modern "Utopians" All Plead for Sex Equality!

By F. W. L. ESCH

SOME day we may have a perfect world... or at least we hope we will have a world which will appear almost perfect in comparison with the world of to-day.

When that time comes, what part will women play in the affairs of this future Utopia?

It is not only a fascinating question; but it is an important one, because events, which are gradually shaping the future status of women, are taking place every day all over the world.

ALMOST every modern thinker who has visualised the world of the future has described a state in which women have absolute equality with men.

Plato, the greatest philosopher of all time, who lived more than 300 years before Christ, forecast, in his famous Utopian study, "The Republic," the emancipation of women.

In "The Republic" women have just as much chance as men of qualifying for the status of "Guardian"; the ruling class.

Plato was courageous enough to say that natural talents are distributed among women just as much as among men, and that, barring certain manual labor, women could do the same kind of work as men.

His idea may not seem so strange to-day; but when he was alive it was revolutionary in the extreme, because at that time women were regarded as superior kinds of animals or, at the best, men who had "gone wrong."

No philosopher dared to express similar opinions about sex equality for another two thousand years.

OF all the Utopias written since Plato started the idea and Sir Thomas More (1478-1535) gave it a name, there are only a few which do not propose equal rights for women.

Among these are Sir Francis Bacon's "New Atlantis," Andreae's "Christianopolis," Tomasso's "Campanella," and Sir Thomas More's famous "Utopia"—all written before 1650.

Sir Thomas did his best for women, and he advocated many reforms which have since come into existence, but the tide was too strong against the unfairly-treated sex for him or the other Utopians of those days to go against the old Biblical idea of the patriarchate, which gives the male being supreme power in Heaven, Parliament, and the Home.

It was not until the late 18th century that men started to dream, again, of a world in which women would take their places as efficient and rational human beings beside their menfolk.

All the Utopias, by the by, have been written by men.

We find Charles Fourier (1772-1837), a Frenchman, dreaming of a world in which the forces of war, instead of being waged against man, are turned upon nature, so that industrial armies of "golden youths and maidens" span rivers with bridges, re-wood barren mountains, drain marshes, construct irrigation schemes, and generally improve the face of the earth.

THE spirit of ambition draws woman from thoughts of motherhood, to dreams of a career. Utopia must combine the two.

Marriage Must Be for Love Only

THEODOR HERTZKA, a German (born 1845), of comparatively modern times, wrote one of the most interesting Utopias from the woman's point of view.

In his "Visit to Freeland" he advocates the right of women to make careers for themselves, but he also regards marriage as the main destiny of most women.

He insists, however, that it should always be a marriage for love, and he aims to place every woman in a position which will free her from the necessity of marrying just for the sake of getting a home.

Each single woman receives a substantial income from the State; enough to make her independent and provide her with necessary cash to cultivate her talents, physical and mental.

Married women get half the amount of the single women, but their allowance is increased with the birth of each child, in addition to special endowments for the children.

Hertzka hoped, in this way, to free single women, not only from marrying out of necessity, but also from the need of earning their livings, and so getting ideas about a career, though if they truly wanted to work they were free to do so.

H. G. WELLS, in "A Modern Utopia" (published 1905), follows rather similar lines to Hertzka, and outlines a scheme for the endowment of women on the theory that motherhood is a service to the nation

The birth of children is properly regulated, and it is regarded as a legitimate claim to a living. He says: "A woman who is, or is becoming, a mother is as much entitled to wages above the minimum wage, to support, to freedom, and to respect and dignity, as any State official."

In his Utopia the husband has to pay a certain wage to the mother, but as well as this she gets an income from the State on the birth of each child, and this goes on as long as the child is reared to the minimum standard of physical development. The mother gets a larger income if she rears her children above standard. She is not allowed to follow a career unless she can employ some properly-qualified person to take her place as a mother.

Tarbouriech, another of the French visionaries, in "La Cite Future," places the care of children in the hands of specially-trained women who have chosen this work as a career.

He says: "Woman, whether economically, socially, or politically, is the equal of man (in this future city), and she will take part with him in public, intellectual, and artistic life."

Sweven, whose Utopian study, "Limanora," was published in 1903, gives a reason why women should be equal.

He writes: "The higher and the more spiritual we become, the less we permit sex to dominate, and the less difference there is between sexes."

Women as Rulers of the World

A FEW of these "Utopians" have imagined worlds in which women are the rulers.

Sir Bulwer Lytton (1803-1873) describes in his "Coming Race" magnificent and beautiful women of superb physical powers, who are "the scholars, the professors, the learned portion in the community and the advisers of the ruler."

W. H. Hudson in "A Crystal Age" sees a world in which the laws of the beehive have been adopted by human beings gathered together in large families, each one headed by a queen, who is regarded as almost divine.

An American "Utopian," Edward Bellamy (1850-1898) in "Looking Backward" advocates separate government for women.

He enrols all women in a great Industrial Army, controlled absolutely by a woman General-in-Chief, who is appointed by the women.

All the high executive positions in this feminine army are given only to women who have been wives and mothers. The Army of Women works in alliance with the Army of Men.

A similar idea, but a more practical one, is suggested in Saunders' Utopia, "Kalomera," which is one of the most sensible Utopias ever written.

"Kalomera" is governed by two rulers, a man and a woman. They are elected for life by their own sex. When the man dies the woman rules, and vice versa.

Only those tasks which can be performed better by men, such as industrial departments, are controlled wholly by men. But there is a women's department which supervises all the affairs of every woman in the country, and this department is ruled only by the woman ruler, even if she is not actually controlling the state.

When some problem crops up which concerns both sexes, councils of men and women unite to discuss the matter, but in every other way there is a separate, and absolutely self-contained Government for the sexes. They even have their own courts and judges.

Australian women who regard the Feminist movement as a little "cranky" should find food for thought in this marked tendency of the "Utopians" towards Feminism. Many other "Utopias" have been written besides those mentioned, but they are mainly political.

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Mrs. C. Clark, U.

"I am very pleased with the reduction. My bust is quite small now."
Miss L. Feller, A.

"I am very delighted with the result."
Mrs. D. Reck, W.

"There is a great improvement."
Miss R. Heath, B.

"I am thrilled with the results and have already lost over a stone in weight since starting."
Miss M. Cassie, F.

"My busts have become a better and firmer shape."
Mrs. Rossing, A.

NOTE!
These letters and many more are open for inspection at my offices any time.

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GENEROUS *Action* of *Queensland* NURSE

Sister Kenny's Treatment for Paralysis a Gift for the Sick Poor

A NEW FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

Australia sat up and took notice last week when it was made public that Sister Kenny, of Queensland, working under the supervision of the B.M.A., and the Queensland Department of Health, had discovered a successful method of treating paralysis of all kinds.

The discovery is of world-wide importance. It may mean perfect health for thousands of hitherto incurable cases of paralysis and the saving of enormous sums of money to taxpayers who have to support the incurably sick through State Departments.

Miss Kenny has discovered a treatment which could have brought her a fortune. And she has made a gift of it to the people of Australia.

An interesting study of Sister Kenny by The Australian Women's Weekly photographer.

IN Queensland Miss Kenny is as well known as Brisbane's Town Hall.

The Queensland Government has spared no efforts in giving her every possible assistance to do her work. She has the freedom of the railways, and can travel all over the State whenever she wants to, and when she is in Brisbane a car is placed at her disposal.

Queensland knows how to treat its good citizens.

Sister Kenny was "discovered" by The Australian Women's Weekly last week resting at the beautiful Cavell Home for ex-war nurses at Summer Hill.

She was not in the least excited by the fact that newspapers were parading the news of her discovery from their poster fronts.

"The work has been going on for 14 years," she said. "I was not free to make announcements about it before, because it had not been tried out sufficiently; but now I can talk of it."

Sister Kenny has been suffering from bad health ever since the war. Her war work brought her into prominence through her invention of a patent stretcher.

The money which she made out of this idea has been devoted to her present work. She has not received a penny payment from anyone, nor does she expect it.

Owing to her state of health Miss Kenny has not given her treatment in person to any of the patients who have passed through her clinic during the last 14 years.

The work is done, through deputies, under her direction, but even her part of it has always been subject to the supervision of a proper doctor.

What Is It?

OF course, everybody wants to know what the treatment is, and this is the only thing that Miss Kenny is not free to talk about. The reasons are obvious.

The treatment is of such a nature that it could be exploited by "quacks." Miss Kenny has already had dozens of offers to commercialise her knowledge. She has no intention of doing this, and she does not want anyone else to do it.

"The treatment must be free for poor people," she says. All the cases which have been cured by her so far have been dealt with free of charge.

Dr. J. F. Guinane, who has carried out investigations of the treatment for the Queensland Government, has written a treatise of the method, and this has been presented to the Commonwealth Government.

It is the only copy in the world, and great care had to be taken to safeguard against it falling into unscrupulous hands.

"All I can say about the treatment at present," said Miss Kenny, "is that it is not practised in any other institution; it has nothing to do with massage . . . nor has it anything to do with orthodox nursing."

Patients have been brought to Sister Kenny's clinic, at Townsville, from all over Australia, from New Zealand, England, Scotland, and even from Persia.

THE case from Persia was a young boy, the son of wealthy parents, who had heard about Sister Kenny's almost miraculous treatment.

The lad has now been returned to his native country as healthy as any other child. It cost his parents nothing, except his passage money.

Many wealthy people, whose children or relatives have received treatment, have offered money to Miss Kenny, but she has refused it.

In some cases, the relatives were so anxious to make some payment that they asked what they could do to help the clinic. They were permitted to pay travelling expenses, and so on, of poor people needing treatment.

In this way it has become possible for many poor people in distant parts of Australia to visit the Townsville clinic.

Asked whether her treatment was more successful with children than with adults, Miss Kenny said: "It does not seem to make any difference. It is a treatment for all kinds of paralysis."

She discovered it first when nursing soldiers during the war.

DID *the* RADIO COMMISSION *Give Lady Mayoress* THE AIR?

Astute Moves Circumvent Women's Plans to Inquire Into Broadcasting

What has happened to the meeting of women, which was to have been held "to investigate the work of the Australian Broadcasting Commission with a view to making recommendations for improved programmes"?

Notices have gone out from the honorary organising secretary, Mrs. A. C. Godhard, to the effect that the meeting has been abandoned. These notices followed on the resignation of the Lady Mayoress (Mrs. A. L. Parker), who had accepted the office of president and agreed to convene the meeting.

APPROACHED by The Australian Women's Weekly, the Lady Mayoress declined to give any reason for her resignation.

"I thought it better that the meeting should not be called," was all she would say.

This is such an astonishing change from Mrs. Parker's first attitude of marked enthusiasm towards the idea of calling a meeting, that there is a general belief that she has been approached by some member or representative of the Australian Broadcasting Commission's staff who was well equipped with arguments and wrought this strange change of mind in the Lady Mayoress.

The proposal to form a meeting was one result of the farewell garden party tendered to Lady Game. At the final meeting of the Government Garden Party committee, held at the Hotel Australia on Friday, February 1, the honorary organiser of the party, Mrs. A. C. Godhard summarised the story of certain negotiations she had had with the Australian Broadcasting Commission concerning the sale of the broadcasting rights of the excellent programme presented at the party.

Mrs. Godhard concluded:

"I think that a prominent women's committee should be formed for the purpose of inquiring into the whole matter of national broadcasting. They should ascertain how often the Commission meet and how many meetings each member of the Commission has attended; they should inquire into the qualifications of the chief officers and see if better results could not be achieved for the huge annual expenditure of over £170,000 spent on programmes alone in connection with national broadcasting.

"Almost every person one speaks to frankly admits a preference for programmes supplied by the various B Class stations, and will suffer listening to advertising sandwiched in between musical and other sessions for the sake of the programmes provided by them... I think that women, who have always played such a prominent part in the cultural side of life, should certainly take up this matter and insist on some reorganisation of the programmes which will give improved results."

Major Conder Moves

AFTER the garden party meeting had been closed it was moved "That opportunity be taken to form the nucleus of a committee to investigate the work of the Australian Broadcasting Commission with a view to making recommendations for improved programmes."

This was seconded by Mrs. W. B. Studdy and carried, a number of those present agreeing to join the committee, including the Lady Mayoress, who accepted the office of president, and Mrs. Godhard, who was asked to act as hon. organising secretary.

Now comes an astonishing chapter from the story. It would be natural to think that the A.B.C. would welcome this golden opportunity to obtain frank and constructive criticism from representative bodies of women.

Apparently, however, Major W. T. Conder, the general manager of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, did not feel that his Commission should maintain an attitude of waiting in dignified silence for the views of the meeting.

Many people who were present at the Hotel Australia at the meeting on February 1, and others who were not, received a letter from Major Conder reading as follows:

"Dear Madam,—I have just been informed that you are a member of the committee formed at the instance of Mrs. A. C. Godhard for the purpose of investigating the affairs of the A.B.C.

"If this is so I should appreciate it if you would be good enough to let me know what organisation you are representing on the committee, and also any grounds for dissatisfaction with the Commission's work which you may have."

Had this meeting proceeded there is little doubt that much helpful material would have been gathered for the benefit of the chairman (Mr. W. J. Cleary). The general opinion is that Mr. Cleary is doing a good job under difficult conditions.

A committee of public-spirited women formed on the lines proposed and headed by the Lady Mayoress, would surely have been a very valuable aid to the A.B.C., and an unqualified boon to the public since their activities must inevitably have resulted in improved programmes coming from the "A" class stations.

The question is: Will the women's organisations now allow the whole matter to drop? And, if so, why?

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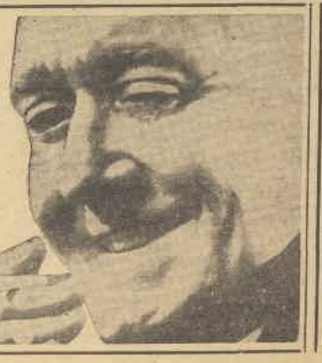

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VICTORIAN *Family* ROBINSON

A thrilling story of castaways on a South Sea isle . . .

By . . .

Beatrice Grimshaw

The Reverend James Robinson, with his frock-coat insufficiently dried and his Anglican dog-collar hanging in festoons, sent lightnings of reproof and disapproval from clerical eyes.

Illustrated by WEP

AFTER the death of the mother, the quiet family life of the mid-Victorian Robinsons in rural England is disturbed by the scandal attaching to an intrigue between Adeline, the second daughter of the Rev. James Robinson, and Captain Charles Chaine, an army officer.

The father forgives his daughter, but is greatly relieved when he is offered a bishopric in far-off Australia, with the prospect of his family being removed from the seat of scandal and the attentions of the captain to his daughter.

Mr. Robinson leaves for Australia with his four children, Eleanor and Adeline, and the twins—a boy and girl of six months.

On the voyage to Australia the ship is wrecked in the Pacific, and just as the passengers are entering the lifeboats Chaine makes his appearance after having been disguised during the voyage as a rough steerage passenger.

CAPTAIN, officers and stewards were working hard to keep the crowd in order; some of the second-classers were giving trouble and one or two of the first. Black was forging ahead, with fists and elbows at work; he reached the nearest of the boats, and was immediately downed, as he tried to get in, by the second mate, whose knuckle-dustered hand gleamed brassy in the flaring light. He tumbled into the scuppers, and nobody bothered about him save his wife, who cried out, and struck at the second mate with her thin fingers. Boats were being filled and lowered as fast as possible; every second person kept asking if there was any danger, if the ship was going to sink, and nobody was answered. The hurried launching of the boats seemed answer enough.

Buzacott, the big mate, beckoned Robinson and Charlie Chaine to him. "You chaps keep the crazy ones off the other boat till I get this away," he said, dashing a hand across his forehead (for the heat was heavy, and the crowding and milling of the people seemed to make it worse). Because these two were asking nothing, he volunteered a hasty statement.

"Struck at high tide, nothing but water holding her up by the stern, hole the size of a house aft, she'll go like a stone in another quarter of an hour—maybe sooner. Easy there with those falls, curse you—— Now, lower away."

The captain was there, come out of the mist like a ghost, and white as a ghost, for whatever had been the cause of the disaster, the blame was and must be his. "There's land close to us," he bellowed through a speaking-trumpet. "You'll all be saved. Keep cool. Starb'd boats——"

No one ever knew what the order might have been, for on that instant the Philippi began to go. It had been "sooner" with a vengeance. Like a ship about to be launched, she started sliding back, back, from the reef that had been her destruction and now was her only hope. A fearful cry arose from the wreck; all order vanished. Boats had been launched, no one knew how many and when. Boats still dangled by the twisting falls, and up, as the vessel reared. Out of them people tumbled, like rats shaken from a trap, and the Philippi, in her death struggle, took them down, and drowned them, as rats are drowned. It lasted not more than a minute, but it seemed to be a year, before the shrieking and the snatching, and the splashing of falling boats and beating oars, was over; before the Philippi had flung herself, like a dying whale in its last flurry, high above the sea, and in the same movement, sank.

DAWN came up out of a bloody sky, and found Addie and Eleanor afloat in a solitary whaleboat, with Lady Gilliland and Mrs. Black, bucketing the oars about, and trying, with poor success, to row.

"Don't look the way you are going, woman," panted Lady Gilliland. "Look at me, and don't hit me in the back; and you, girls, change with us in ten minutes."

"Where are you going?" coolly asked Eleanor.

The Governor's wife lay on her oar, and considered. She had been too busy governing, to remember that.

"There's an island ahead," she said. "I saw it a minute ago."

"There's a boat," suddenly cried Addie, as the sun, like a copper gong, rose round and splendid, beating the sea with its rays. And a boat there was not half a mile away, making, like themselves, for the island.

"Father!" cried Eleanor anxiously.

"Gerald's there; I can see him," Mrs. Black said, weeping with joy.

"I should expect Gerald to be there," Lady Gilliland commented, "whoever was or wasn't. Don't count too much on your father, Eleanor. The boats were far too few; someone certainly should be hanged for it. Yes, you can row, if you try. Lean—don't dip too deep."

The women pulled their best, little white hands dragging on the oars, little corseted figures creaking.

"I see——" suddenly began Adeline, and stopped. She could not believe what she saw, or thought she saw. But Eleanor broke into a joyous cry: "Father is there—oh, what a boat—only one oar, and the thwarts all smashed——"

"Yes," Lady Gilliland cut in, "it must have been one of the boats that broke loose and fell into the water. And I see," she went on discreetly, "they've been drying their clothes."

The men in the other boat, now distant only a few hundred yards, were hurriedly putting on shirts that had been spread to dry. Adeline and Eleanor modestly looked away.

Lady Gilliland said: "I knew your father wouldn't have taken a place in any of the boats that got away with passengers. You'll find that he and the others were swimming for their lives, and came across that wreck of a thing, in the dark."

"Gerald," said Mrs. Black, "is so brave."

"I noticed that," the Governor's wife replied dryly.

They pulled in silence for a few minutes, slowly approaching the island. Tired, shaken as they were, the beauty of the place impressed them less than it might have done in a happier moment; and yet they all knew that here they saw the island dream mapped out in real, before their eyes. No one had actually believed that coral sands could be so white, just like snow on a Christmas card—or that shallows could be colored like these, opal, amethyst and green, or that palm trees, when one came close to them, were quite like the palms in missionary pictures, only far more lovely, because they were not black and white, but a wonderful amber-green. Behind the palm trees rose the thick of a dusky forest, with white and colored birds flying over; and on the beach there were trees that shed flowers into the water, some bright as geraniums and some like big may blossoms. There were also orange trees and trees with queer round lemons, and these fruits fell into the water, too, and went bobbing about like little fairy barques, among the flowers and the leaves and the heavily sailing green coconuts fallen from the tops of the palms.

Afterwards, the girls and Lady Gilliland, and Mrs. Black, were to remember all these things, and others—the line of tumbling foam through which they guided their boat, taking advantage of an opening; the sound of the breakers shattering in honeyed thunder; the unforgettable scent that rushed to meet them as the boat neared the land; odor compact of flowers, of leaves sun-warmed, of salt and sand and shell. They did not know that they were seeing, hearing, smelling the South Seas. Later—years later—they would remember and, remembering, some of them would sigh.

. . .

Before the boat was well into shallow water, the three men on the shore had run in thigh deep to meet her. Eleanor fairly flung herself across the gunwale into her father's arms. Lady Gilliland, sitting very erect, and seeming to have a ghostly eyeglass at her eye, observed everything coolly. One might have thought she deemed Eleanor's onslaught a shade too impulsive. Gerald Black patted his wife on the back; she was crying with happiness. The mate, red Buzacott, took hold of the boat's bow and began to haul. "Here, you," he cried, "lend a hand; heave, bullies! —heave and wake the dead!" Black and the others pulled the boat up, and the women were helped over the bow on to the sand.

The man whom Buzacott had addressed as "you" was quick to catch Adeline's elbows, and swing her down. She stood with eyes staring, and mouth falling open, unconscious, apparently, of the fact that he still held her, and leaning her full weight on his hands.

"Charlie," was what she said, voicelessly speaking, as one speaks in a dream. But Charlie heard.

"Yes, it's me," he answered, staring at her, as if his eyes were thirsty creatures that hadn't had a drink for years. "Yes, I was in the steerage."

"I thought it was you—I thought—but I couldn't quite believe——"

"Sh," he said softly, looking over his shoulder.

They drew apart. The Vicar was looking at them.

On that coral strand, in the midst (or almost in the midst) of a shipwreck, the Reverend James Robinson, with his frock coat insufficiently dried, and his Anglican dog-collar hanging in festoons, sent lightnings of reproof and disapproval from clerical eyes. He had almost forgotten that Charlie was a sinner of the deepest dye (or if not, it certainly wasn't Charlie's fault) while they were swimming for their lives through a welter of snatching, screaming people; while he and Charlie tried to help one after another, giving up bits of wreckage to smothering women, catching drowned children by the hair, and only later realising they were drowned; swimming on and on, into a blankness of dark and tumbling foam, where no one seemed to be; picked up at last and dragged into the broken boat by Buzacott and by the runner, Black, who, now that he was safe, had regained something of poise and common sense.

WHILE all that was going on, one had simply admired Charlie, strong, brave, and helpful. And after the boat came to land, and they all stood watching that other boat (the only one, as they were to learn, that, beside theirs, had escaped) while they were shaken by a common anxiety—Robinson, for his daughters, who had been torn from him in the last mad rush; Black, for his wife; Charlie for Adeline—nothing seemed to matter very much.

But the girls were not dead, thank God, and here was Charlie with Adeline almost in his arms, and they were all thrown together, on a desert island, for nobody knew how long. And immediately, he began to feel antagonistic to Charlie. It was a poor trick to have played, when Charlie had said good-bye, and promised to behave himself. Was this behaving?

Please turn to Page 46.

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Moonlight COMEDY

A minute later she had dragged Lynn above the waterline and was anxiously helping him.

COMPLETE Short Story

By - - -

George Weston

Illustrated by FISCHER

AT three o'clock in the afternoon of the day when our story opens, a venerable saloon car might have been seen making its way along the coast road of the Point.

This car, ancient to such a degree that it was known to the ribald as the Ark, was nevertheless in spotless condition. Its windows glistened in the sunlight. Its brasswork gleamed like burnished gold. And though it towered like a slowly moving giant above the lesser traffic which passed it, its height denoted dignity rather than humor, and was indeed a clue, or symbol, to the two passengers who occupied the front seat of its stately interior.

Miss Burgess, of Miss Burgess' School for Girls, was driving. Her eyeglasses were attached to a wide, black ribbon, and she was strong in the knowledge that for forty years, no matter how drastically the fashions of feminine skirts had changed their datum lines, no living man could truthfully say that he had seen her knees.

The second occupant of the car was Miss Burgess' brother, Professor Oswald Burgess, M.A., LL.D.—a brisk little man with a quizical, learned air. His diction was exceedingly proper, but the intelligentsia knew that when he reached a certain mellowness of mood among his peers, he could deliver himself of an unpublished Ciceronian oration which first astonished and then delighted Latin scholars to such an extent that they had been known to laugh themselves to tears.

And the third occupant of the car was Sonia, the niece of all that learning which has just been briefly outlined.

The presence of Sonia in the Ark, of course, implied nothing remarkable; but even as the Portland Vase, that marvellous product of a classical age, pleases the eye—even as, in spite of its cultural background and museum setting, it is altogether lovely in form and texture and minor embellishment—so, too, was Sonia Burgess.

And though outwardly she tried to look intellectually self-contained, and to the eye of the beholder was as cool as a lily in ice-water, lately at night she had been sitting in her bedroom at the Burgess' summer cottage on the Point—sitting in the window of her bedroom and dreaming, and musing, and breathlessly watching that sweet regent of the sky which, for want of a better name, is called the moon.

Every earnest student of life may hazard one guess about this. . . .

THE Ark had come to rest in front of a chateau which overlooked the ocean.

It was an imposing house; and although it had only just been finished, it had been built so artfully that it looked as if it were old enough to have seen the Hesperus.

By the side of the chateau, a swan pond had been dredged. At the rear was a private golf course. And near the edge of the sea was a Roman bathing pavilion, complete to a mural mosaic of Neptune whipping his foam-flecked steeds.

Aunt Frances and Uncle Oswald had gone inside to pay their respects to their new neighbors; but Sonia, suddenly and privately feeling somewhat shabby in the midst of so much splendor, had stayed in the Ark.

And there she sat, pensive and quiet, looking at the lighthouse and the ocean, and then turning to see if she could locate the two red chimneys of the cottage, the Burgess' modest house on the other side of the Point. This Point, a rocky promontory, projected its sinuous length for nearly a mile into the sea, always making Sonia think of a dragon, the lighthouse on the far end serving at night as a rolling, bloodshot eye.

"There may be a storm to-morrow," she thought, "the way the waves are breaking over the Dragon's back."

She had hardly completed this weatherwise reflection when a car came tearing round the circular driveway, driven by a girl with white-gold hair and lips like two sliced strawberries. Evidently she hadn't expected to find another car on the drive, and possibly she lost her head for a moment, stepping on the accelerator instead of the brake.

Whatever the reason, she struck the spare tyre of Sonia's car with such a tremendous though muffled shock that the venerable saloon first slewed off the driveway and then tilted backward over the steep fringe of lawn which bordered the swan pond.

There was one faint, stifled shout, and the Ark reached the water with one great splash, one great surge of ponds and swans.

Now, the moment before the Ark was launched upon the Sea of Swans, Sonia, making a desperate effort to get to the door, had caught a glimpse of a bronzed young man bounding up from the bathing-hut on the beach.

A single glimpse, and then the waters of the pond had come welling through the open windows and she had all she could do to hold her breath until she could push through one of those same open windows which had so recently admitted the flood. In this escape she was assisted by a pair of large hands which seemed to descend like grappling hooks to grasp her firmly underneath her arms.

"Are you all right?" asked a voice, as she shook her head and blinked her eyes in order to clear her vision.

"Rather damp—I'm afraid—but otherwise apparently—in fairly good order," she managed to say; and being able to see by that time, she perceived that the bronzed young man was lying flat on the roof of the Ark and was still holding her, firmly but gently.

"Anyone else in the car?" he asked.

"A sensible question, but fortunately, no."

"Fine. Now let's see if I can pull you up."

Over his shoulder, Sonia caught sight of the girl with the strawberry mouth, and this girl was watching her with an impatient air—with an air, indeed, which seemed to say, "In the name of Heaven, what are you waiting for? Is it because he has his arm round you?" And perhaps for the reason that it had always been a trait of the Burgesses never to withdraw under fire, Sonia relaxed and smiled at the young man who was so carefully holding her from slipping backward into the water.

"If you'll wait a moment—till I pull myself together . . ." she said. "I've never been in a pond with swans before. I had no idea it could be so exciting."

"Do you live about here?" he asked.

"Yes," she said. "Do you?"

"I live here"—this with a careless backward nod towards the chateau. "I'm Lynn Tucker."

"I live on the other side of the Point. I'm Sonia Burgess."

As wet as she was, he whistled.

"You have heard about us?" she asked.

"Yes, but your nose isn't as blue as I thought it would be."

"Do you think it will color with age?"

They both laughed at this, and immediately felt better acquainted, eyeing each other more like old friends, her glance shyly and yet proudly asking, "Would you call that bad?" and his eagerly inquiring, "Do you know any more like that?"

"Were you calling to see me when Midge bumped you?" he as eagerly asked aloud.

"No. I was staying outside to avoid you."

"You mean you have heard about me?"

BUT she wouldn't tell him that.

"Then what were you doing in front of the house?"

She answered that calmly and slowly as one answers an impatient child.

"My uncle and aunt are calling on your father and mother. They couldn't have heard the splash or they would be out here. And that reminds me, we'll have to find some way to take them home." Whereupon, lifting her hands, "So now, if you please——"

Both helping, she was soon on firm land. The girl with the white-gold hair and the strawberry lips was waiting on the edge of the driveway—waiting, it seemed to Sonia, with more impatience than penitence in her manner.

"I'm awfully sorry," she said in a flat little voice. "It was my fault, of course."

Lynn beamed at them both.

"This is Midge," he said. "Miss Midge Ranford—Miss Sonia Burgess. Miss Ranford is staying with us, and—listen, Midge, that gives me a good idea. You two girls are about the same size. So suppose you take Miss Burgess to your room, and give her something dry to wear, and I'll phone for a breakdown lorry." Then turning to Sonia, "I'll take you home as soon as you're ready to go."

A week had passed—a week and five hours, to be exact—and Uncle Oswald was seated at the table in the dining-room of the cottage chatting with Sonia over an after-dinner cigarette. The Ark having been duly salvaged and repaired, Aunt Frances had gone to town that afternoon. So Uncle Oswald and Sonia had dined alone.

"Oh, Uncle Oswald," said Sonia, after a thoughtful pause during which she had been looking over his shoulder at the darkening sky and sea.

"Yes, my dear."

"Do you mind if I talk to you—very confidentially?"

"Not at all. Why should I?" And to help her over an awkward moment of silence, "You are still uncertain about the arrangement of the chapters?"

This was a reference to "Tennyson—the Poet and the Man" which Sonia was writing that summer. She and Uncle Oswald had been discussing authorities and sequences earlier in the day.

"No; it isn't the book," she slowly told him. "It's something more complicated—and I doubt if there are textbooks on the subject. As a matter of fact," she continued, her color rising, her words now coming faster, "I would like to talk to you about myself and Lynn Tucker. Do you mind?"

"Of course not." And hiding a quizical smile, he again thought to help her over an awkward moment of silence. "So where shall we start?"

Sonia leaned over the table, her chin cradled on the backs of her interlaced fingers.

"It is difficult to decide exactly where to start," she said in a musing voice. "But I think we may as well begin with Miss Ogilvie, and Miss Abbott, and Miss Fitzgerald—and the other teachers at school, most of whom have been there ever since I can remember. You know them, Uncle Oswald. You know them well. So I need not remind you that they are unmarried."

"No."

"And, of course, you know Aunt Frances very well."

"Yes."

"And she is unmarried."

"Very much unmarried."

Sonia smiled.

"I like you, Uncle Oswald," she said, leaning over for a moment and touching his hand. "You have such a happy gift of emphasis. But you are probably wondering why on earth I have started with the teachers. I have started with them because they have been in my thoughts for nearly a year. Whenever I look at them, or listen to them, I have lately seemed to see a prophetic vision of myself—that is, you understand, if I become like Aunt Frances, and never marry."

Whereupon he gave her a glance which was both significant and sympathetic, and said, "I think I sufficiently follow your line of thought."

"Now on the other hand," continued Sonia, releasing her fingers long enough to make a small, quaint gesture, "here's Lynn Tucker——"

"Exactly."

"And Midge Ranford——"

"Ah, yes."

"And I don't mind telling you, very confidentially, that I like Lynn Tucker."

"I was beginning to suspect."

Please turn to Page 38

A Daring Joke that Failed

By a Girl of 17

Conflict

My head and heart are quarrelsome,
They simply can't agree,
And all because I know that you
Are bent on kissing me!

My fickle heart has acquiesced
And thinks it rather fun,
But head is strangely out of sorts
And growls at everyone.

He says that love's a foolish game
And folly to the wise;
He says that once you kiss a man
The soul of friendship dies.

Yet heart maintains a kiss is sweet,
And so with shocked dismay,
I find my young impulsive heart
Has really won the day!

—Yvonne Webb.

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Mr. Valentine's DAY

COMPLETE SHORT STORY

... By ... Margaret CRAVEN

He was a lonely, rich old man, but he certainly had his day.

Illustrated by FISCHER

SALLY BETT perched on the top step of the stairs, and tried very hard to think of something to do. Beside her sat one Phoebe Wren, as long legged as herself, and just as deep in intensive thought.

Rain beat against the window on the landing and rolled down the pane in slow, fat drops. And up from the living-room came a persistent hum, as if a thousand honeybees were all busy buzzing at once—a noise which Sally Bett had learned to recognise as peculiar to that afternoon when it was her mother's turn to entertain the ladies' book circle.

Sally Bett had opened the door for the book circle, and Phoebe Wren, who lived across the road, had shown the book circle where to take off its wraps. Now they waited dismally in their best dresses, hoping that when at last it came time for refreshments the book circle would not eat all the cakes.

The door of the spare room was open, and through it came a pungent but pleasant smell, a mingling of damp coats, strange powders and perfumes. It would be nice to go in there and try everything on.

Once upon a time on a day like this, the book circle being assembled at Phoebe Wren's, they had done this and more, too.

They had looked in all the purses, and decided it was a shame that some ladies of the book circle had so much more money than others. They had put all the notes and coins into one pile, and redistributed them as evenly as they could. This experiment in social reform had been disappointing, but Sally Bett had fared better than Phoebe Wren, and was willing to try it again.

She raised a questioning eye, and cocked her head in the direction of the spare room.

"No-o-o-o-o," declared Phoebe Wren positively, and that was that!

Well, anyway, they could tell secrets. Sally Bett put her elbows on her knees, and tried to remember some secret to tell.

But nothing came. Nothing unless it was Mrs. Mercham's high voice, telling the book circle with detail and persistence all about her journey to Japan.

"If I could only give you ladies some idea of the beauty of that island empire," declared Mrs. Mercham, "of the sacred deer at Nara, of the red-lacquer torii at Miyazaki, and above all of the little children of Nippon doing their tumbling tricks, and then coming forward to beg, holding out their little hands and crying, 'No mamma, no papa, no chow-chow.'"

Sally Bett looked at Phoebe Wren, and, as if inspired by some great inner urge, they rose.

"Me first," said Sally Bett, claiming that precedence as daughter of the house.

She turned a cartwheel, followed by a somersault, and then she held out her hands to an imaginary audience and cried, "No mamma, no papa, no chow-chow," in as sad a voice as she could manage.

This was wonderful. Not to be outdone, Phoebe Wren turned a cartwheel and set up a plaintive begging that delighted them both. Finally Sally Bett stood on her head in the corner, which position she managed to maintain a brief instant before coming down with a crash that shook the very foundations of the book circle and sent the family cook scuttling up the stairs.

"Whatever you two are up to now," said Annie, "your mother says stop."

They waited until Annie had gone down again, and then they retired to the bedroom of Sally Bett's mother. It would be pleasant to go out on the street and turn cartwheels for the benefit of passers-by, but the rain was coming down in a steady drizzle, and even if it weren't, they couldn't get away with this. They would have to think of something better. On the table by the bed was the telephone. Sally Bett and Phoebe Wren went over and looked at it. The telephone was one of their favorite rainy-day sports. All the really bright children in town shared it, and the procedure was just about the same.

YOU chose a day when your mother was out. Then you ran a stubby finger down the leaves of the telephone book until you came to a queer or interesting name of somebody your mother didn't know. Then you gave the number to the operator—and waited.

Pretty soon somebody said "Hello," and then you said in as grown-up a voice as you could manage, "How do you do? This is the telephone inspector. We would like to test your telephone. Would you please stand two feet to the right and say 'Ah'?" If you had any luck they would do it, and then you said, "Thank you. Now would you please stand two feet to the left and say, 'Oh'?"

Perhaps they would do this, too, and then you said, "Now would you please stand on a chair and say, 'Aye'?"

Now the game was getting harder. They had to be very stupid indeed to do this, but occasionally they did. And when they did, you said, "Now would you please stand on your head and say, 'Ouch'?"

Neither Sally Bett nor Phoebe Wren knew if there lived a man or woman stupid enough to do that, because at this point they always hung up very quickly and went into fits of giggles.

It was a lovely game — a little dangerous and therefore interesting.

The last time they had tried it they had had bad luck and picked on a lady with naughty little girls of her own. The minute they had asked her to please stand two feet to the right she had said, "Look here, young lady, I'll report you to the telephone operator."

She had done it, too, and pretty soon the operator had rung up with a vengeance, and told the cook "to keep those children away from the telephone AT ONCE." It had required some ingenuity to persuade Annie not to report this to parental headquarters.

PHOEBE WREN and Sally Bett looked at that telephone. They had some notion of combining this new game with the old, creating a new sport beyond their furthest dreams.

Phoebe Wren sat on the bed, spreading her knees to make a lap for the big telephone book.

"It's my turn," she declared. "I'll pick the name."

She let the book open where it would, shut her eyes very tight, and mumbled:

"Eeney-meeney-miney-moe,
Catch a nigger by his toe,
If he hollers let him go,
Eeney-meeney-miney-moe."

With the "moe" she plunked her finger down on the page, and both little girls opened their eyes to see what it hit.

Phoebe Wren's finger was squarely on the name—E. J. Valentine, 24 Maythorn Ave., Graystone 2409.

Valentine—and this was February! It was a miracle—no less.

"Perhaps," said Phoebe Wren slowly, "perhaps that's the person that sends the valentines."

It wasn't, and they both knew it.

Still it was a wonderful idea. Sally Bett was proud of Phoebe Wren just for thinking it. It spurred her on to bigger things.

"I'll phone," she said, to prove the sincerity of her approval. "I'm not afraid."

She picked up the receiver and gave the number—and then they waited. They waited for what seemed an interminable time, and finally a masculine voice said "Hello."

Sally Bett was trembling, but she couldn't stop now. She said, "Is this Mr. Valentine?" in a quavery voice that sounded as if it came from a very frightened little girl, and did.

"It is," said the gentleman on the other end, somewhat surprised.

"Well," said Sally Bett, who was now a poor child of Nippon, holding out her little hands, "are you the man who sends the valentines, because if you are, and have any left, we'd like some please, because we have no mamma, and no papa, and no——"

She was going to say "chow-chow," but Phoebe Wren shook her head violently.

"Because we have no mamma, and no papa, and no valentines," repeated Sally Bett limply.

The man on the other end let out what can only be described as a kind of gasp. Then his voice softened perceptibly.

"Well, well," said Mr. Valentine, "I shall have to see what can be done about this."

This immediate compliance frightened Sally Bett more than his refusal could have frightened her. She felt that she was in very deep water, and getting deeper. She was willing to let well enough alone.

"Well, all right, then," she told him. "All right, then. Good-bye."

"Wait a minute," said Mr. Valentine, "you didn't tell me your names."

Sally Bett looked at Phoebe Wren for encouragement.

"It's your turn," she whispered desperately.

Phoebe Wren took the receiver.

"I'm Phoebe Wren," she told him, "and she's Sally Bett Cooper. I was born in a hospital, but Sally Bett was just born in a house. We're eight years old, and I'm the oldest. I'm six days oldest."

"Is that so?" said Mr. Valentine, as if he hadn't heard anything as interesting as this in all his life. "And where do you live?"

"At four-fifty Pine Street," said Phoebe Wren promptly, giving her home address.

"Thank you," said Mr. Valentine, "I'll remember that."

"Well, good-bye then, and don't forget," said Phoebe Wren hastily, and she put the receiver on its hook.

For a moment they both half expected the ceiling to fall. But no—the rain still beat against the windows and, when Sally Bett opened the door into the hall, Mrs. Mercham's voice was still telling the book circle all about Japan.

Valentine's Day came on a Saturday. At a quarter past seven Sally Bett was dressed and in the living-room—her cold little hands ready to clamp down upon the keyboard in an attack upon the day's practising. And across the street Phoebe Wren was doing the same thing with the violin, sending an array of squeaky tones out upon the morning air, to the misery of those members of her family who were trying to sleep.

Other days it required much maternal discipline to get either young lady within twenty feet of a musical instrument, but they banged off their scales early every Saturday morning, so as to be free to use this day as little girls were probably intended to use it.

The parcel post wasn't due until eleven, and so, after breakfast, Sally Bett made a raid on the kitchen, an event which poor Annie had learned to anticipate with some pain. Phoebe Wren did the same thing, and soon they met at Phoebe Wren's house to consider the loot.

Sally Bett had an old tin, two eggs, two cupsful of flour, three tablespoonsful of cocoa, and a pint of milk. Phoebe Wren had a cup with a nick in it, two uncooked chicken wings, a pat of butter, two apples, and an ancient pie dish.

Then they removed the spoils to the playhouse which Phoebe Wren's big brother had built for them in the back garden. It contained one large room, fully six feet by eight. In it were two discarded chairs, an ancient table, and a small airtight stove. The window wouldn't shut, and the floor was uneven. Also, when it rained the roof leaked. Both of them, however, considered the house quite perfect.

Sally Bett made a fire. Sally Bett's dog lay under the table, ready to jump if something should fall on him. And Sally Bett's best friend stuck her small nose into a battered cookery book.

"Let's make a pie," suggested Phoebe Wren. "Let's make a heart-shaped pie."

This consumed a lot of time. When the pie emerged, a trifle burned, and anything but heart-shaped, they put it proudly on the table.

"It's your turn," announced Sally Bett. "You go to the house and see what time it is."

They had done this twelve times in two hours, but eleven refused to be hurried. When Phoebe Wren opened the door they heard the postman's whistle far down the street.

They bounced out the door like rubber balls, and began to run. They met him on the corner. There was nothing from Mr. Valentine.

"I 'spect he forgot us," said Phoebe Wren.

They walked slowly. It was too bad such a lovely game had to end like this. When they reached home, a delivery van had stopped before the house, and a man was rummaging round in the back.

They stopped and watched him. He had a large package and was reading the name.

"Is this where Phoebe Wren lives?" he asked.

"I'm Phoebe Wren," said that young lady.

"Sign here," said the delivery man.

This was more than Sally Bett could stand.

"Isn't there anything for me?" she asked. "My name is Sally Bett Cooper."

"So there is."

He took out another large box, exactly the same shape as the other.

They both signed. They were so stunned they just held the boxes for a moment until he had driven off, and then, with a whoop, they made for the house and tore off the strings.

They pulled off the wrapping-paper and took off the box lids. They untied ribbons and removed two large and lifelike dolls with eyes that opened and shut, with real hair, and clothes that came off and fastened with real buttons and things.

On each doll was a card which read: "From Mr. Valentine."

They were making quite a lot of noise now without knowing it, and presently Phoebe Wren's older sister came to see what the fuss was about.

She was sixteen, and she thought she knew everything.

"Phoebe," she said in a superior manner, "where on earth did you get that doll?"

"Mr. Valentine gave it to me," said Phoebe Wren.

"Mr. who?"

"Mr. Valentine," repeated Phoebe Wren.

"Let me see it," demanded Alice.

Please turn to Page 32

"Is this Mr. Valentine?" asked Sally Bett in a quavery voice. "Are you the man that sends out the valentines?"

My Favorite Poem

Love

How deep Love is!
So deep that if thy brother's grief or sin
Should seem unfathomed,
Love's depth would fold him in
The everlasting arms that
Underneath are strongly tender.

How wide Love is!
So wide that all of humankind
Are held within its sweet embrace—
No one too far to find
That sheltering wings that brood
Are gently tender.

How high Love is!
So high that no petitioner's desire
Can soar beyond the promises
That ever higher
Beckon him upward—
Holy and tender.

How near Love is!
So near that neither fear nor ill
Can dwell within thy thought,
But nearer still,
The voice that whispers comfort in—
Healing and tender.

—Elizabeth Sudborough.

Sent in by Mrs. M. Harvey, 227 Ocean St., Narrabeen, N.S.W.

A Promise Fulfilled!

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The Fashion Parade

by Jessie Tait, sketched by Petrov

● *RODIER'S "Tchouklap" and woollen, very thin and accordion pleated by means of rubber threads running horizontally. This is one of the many lastex woollens.*

● *THE very newest silk for formal afternoon wear. A heavy white dull silk with black cellophane hairs sticking up like porcupine quills. It is delightfully soft.*

● *A NEW crepe called onondaga with irregular raised-up dots in white on a tobacco-brown dull surface. Suitable for afternoon frocks to wear alone or under a topcoat.*

● *THIS yellow woollen is called raidjax. It has very deep ridges running vertically. It is heavy, dull, and very rough. Used for one-piece dresses, coats, or suits.*

● *A FINE checked tweed, suitable for sports suits or a country coat. The surface is rough and dull. This is one of the most popular of the new materials.*

NEW FABRICS *for* AUTUMN *and* WINTER!

Woollens, Silks, Velvets and Brocades Give Dignity and Variety to the Mode

NEW materials have been manufactured for autumn and winter clothes. They are more interesting than they have ever been, both in color and texture. With the simple frocks now so much in vogue, it is necessary to have interesting fabrics.

Manufacturers have certainly excelled themselves, and everyone will be fascinated by the new range of woollens, silks, velvets, and brocades.

WOOLLENS for your coat will be of a granulated or duvetine type, with diagonal or vertical lines embedded in or rising up from the surface. They will be all one color.

Those for your suit or informal ensemble will be tweedy and hairy; or rough with a bark-like surface—in solid color or in two tones of one color, or in two or three colors. Those for your dresses will be thin, hairy, ribbed, shirred, quilted and puckered into various designs. These will be one color, or with hairs on a contrasting surface.

Plaids, stripes, checks and dots are very smart. Some wools are woven with lastex, giving a shirred effect that is very smart.

You will be able to buy two materials in the same color but with a different surface, for your dress and coat or for your coat and skirt. One has a wrinkled surface (for the coat), and the other is of lighter weight and more or less smooth—for the dress or skirt.

Ribs and Blisters

THE ribbed and blistered woollens are most varied. Wide and narrow ridges are of any depth to a quarter of an inch. Sometimes a metal thread is run between, the surface being generally rough. Blistered wools show various patterns in the weave, sometimes spots, a honeycomb or hand-knitted effect. These are raised up from the surface, giving a crinkled shirred appearance.

Eighty per cent. of the woollens are hairy, almost furry. You'll want to stroke them. Angora hairs, calf hairs, rabbit hairs, goat hairs, ostrich and alpaca hairs, which are woven through the thick and thin wools. Sometimes they are short like last year's angora, but mostly they are longer. They can be an inch long. There are metal hairs sprouting out of dark fabrics, and even silks have long silken hairs. There is a black woollen called "Djarouine," that is sparsely covered with inch long black shiny hairs (of a polecat). They lie flat and glistening. This is for a top coat. White angora hairs are used on deep-shaded materials and on grey. Most of the time the hairs match the fabric.

There are exciting new tweeds—white and colored flecks woven in with brown, grey or navy-blue. Small broken checks and stripes and plaids. There are rough, coarse-textured wools, with knobbly surfaces for sports suits and coats.

There are some smooth wools for cocktail clothes, formal ensembles and evening wear. These woollens are very fine and dull. They look rather like crepe romaine. Woollen evening dresses will be very popular for winter. They really look just like a dull crepe.

Delightful Colors

FOR daytime woollens woodland shades come first. Almost every green is seen, greyish moss-green, leaf-green, pine-green, grass-green, cypress-green, bottle-green and almond-green. Next, all the browns—from tobacco to light tan. Black, as usual, is the smartest for formal clothes. Yellow, especially when allied to brown, navy-blue, grey, dregs-of-wine (a new deep wine shade), prune-brown, tan and green, tan and grey, dark brown and yellow, dark brown and green, navy-blue and red, black and yellow, grey and navy-blue, grey and wine, are smart combinations.

The autumn crepes and silks are all these colors, with purple being a strong favorite.

YOU'LL wear more velvet both by day and by night than ever before. At last science has found a way to make it uncrushable. It is appearing in all sorts of new guises, ribbed, checked, dotted, shirred, crinkled and with metal threads running through it. There are firm velvets and soft velvets. Moire velvet has the nap contrasting with the ground, giving a changeable effect. There are dull velvets and shiny velvets. You will use the shiny velvet for evening dresses and coats, and the dull ones for day wear.

Velveteen is used for day suits, blouses, dresses, coats and trimmings. It is perhaps the most popular material for daytime use.

Silks include taffetas, crepes, alpacas, moires, satins and failles. They have a dry crisp quality. Everything has firmness. Nothing is limp. Crepes are dull with ribbed surfaces and small pebbly effects. Some look as though they had been shirred. Many silks have metal threads running through them forming stripes or patterns. These are seen for day as well as evening wear. There are printed, brocaded and striped taffetas for evening frocks, moires in all colors, hairy and smooth satins. Evening colors are purple, brown, navy-blue, emerald, cerise, bottle-green, orange, grey, black, pale blue and wine.

New Lame Surfaces

LAMES are not shiny and tinselly looking. They are duller, and have crinkled blistered surfaces. You will wear lame for blouses and scarfs in the daytime, and for evening coats and dresses.

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MODISH "CONVERSATION PIECES" . . . .

● *THE gorgeous evening gown at the left is of cloque weave in the new American Beauty color, which is something between rust and brick. Note the slit skirt and the high neckline.*

● *TEA rose moire fashions the next smart model. The voluminous skirt, draped cape, and pearl ornaments at waist and neckline are its fashion highlights.*

● *THE formal evening gown of tabac faille taffeta has its square decolletage offset with matching ornaments and pearl drops mounted in gold. Wide shoulder drapes form into a twisted strand down the centre back.*

● *OF the two girls in this group one wears a moire gown of tulip noir featuring very full sleeves and backless corsage. Interesting accents are provided by the gold belt buckle and bracelet. Her companion wears a perfectly-tailored frock of French almond green in a jacquard weave.*

● *A NEW CONTRAST of tulip noir and turquoise is featured in this dinner frock. The blue over-blouse is of crystelle velvet, with wide velvet sash in the deeper color, and the slashed skirt is of black crepe.*

Photographs by The Australian Women's Weekly. Frocks by courtesy of Farmer's.

Goldenia Tea

Prove the delicious flavour of this super-quality tea—it's the tea that makes mealtime enjoyable.

S275. S4514

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An Editorial

FEBRUARY 23, 1935.

MARRIAGE SCHOOLS OF HITLER

INSTRUCTION "in suitable fashion" on how to choose a wife or husband is now to be added to the Nazi school curriculum. Teachers must impress on their senior scholars that "the choice of a spouse is almost the only means by which the hereditary and racial characteristic of offspring can be influenced, and racial culture preserved."

What instructions, one wonders, will the solemn Hitler pedagogues give on the selection of spouses? Will they tell the strong to choose the strong, the blondes to select the blondes, and generally cherish as an ideal the regimented repetition of approved physical characteristics? Or will they bid the strong to seek the weak and teach the swarthy men to prefer blondes, and so even up divergencies? Will mental powers be tabulated and an "A" grade mathematician be advised to test a woman's skill at figures before popping the fatal question? Will the surly be instructed to court the sunny-tempered, and the domineering to fasten his affections on the meek?

This new marriage instruction promises to develop a technique as involved as German philosophy, and the worst of it will be that it won't work. It will sound fine in the lecture-rooms, but "under the spacious clouds and along the landscapes, and flowing currents" it will be quite another matter.

Herr Hitler forgets that human beings don't do things because they have reasons for them. They find reasons for doing the things they want to do. And marrying in the most unpredictable and irrational of manners is one of those things to which human nature is incurably prone.

Also, such marriages often work out most confoundingly well. For you never can tell what life will do next. It has been known to house a mighty mind in a sickly body, and to bestow a brood of dullards on the union of two university professors. It can't be relied on to follow the Hitler recipe for producing true-to-type offspring.

—THE EDITOR.

Lyric of Life

White Summit

Those things to which we strive and climb
With resolute courage toiling upward
Along the road of life;
The ideals star-hung, the purity of purpose,
The crystal of ambition;
These things, I say, are as a snow-capped mountain
In the distance lying,
White gleaming in the sun,
Our goal, our aim, and object . . .
Our life's white summit of success.

—PHYLLIS DUNCAN-BROWN.

POINTS OF VIEW

Australia Will Be There

QUITE the ball of the season is to be that at the London Guildhall on May 22. According to an official statement in the English Press, "it is intended to make it an Empire gathering in the fullest sense." If you have been invited to the King's Jubilee Celebrations you simply MUST look in at this affair, for all official Dominion representatives are to get a card. It is their particular show.

Mr. Lyons is on his way, and the retinue of Ministers, Ministers' wives, secretaries, and plain Members and their feminine belongings is formidable. Each and every one of them will appear in festal attire at the Guildhall in May, and if all take the floor simultaneously when dancing starts, there will be a record crush.

To figure in a really exclusive show at the other side of the world you don't need to be intellectual, artistic, beautiful, or even rich. You must be a politician—or marry one!

Cabbage, and the Law

"CABBAGES and Kings" are linked for all time in an O. Henry story. Cabbages as a factor in divorce make their first appearance in a real life episode reported from Yugoslavia last week.

The Judges in that interesting country are apparently men who need to be convinced by something more tangible than words. A peasant who applied for a divorce in Belgrade had to part with some hundredweights of cabbages, in addition to various other products of the soil, before he could persuade the Solon on the Bench to give him the freedom to which he was entitled.

"Scandalous," you say. And so said the Yugoslavian Patriarch, who has suspended two of the Judges for corruption. But quite a lot of Australian litigants would be delighted if they could get out of court costs by handing up cabbages—even several tons.

Parable of St. George

FOR a moment or two the other week the centuries seemed to roll back, and five staid, respectable, bewigged figures on a bench took on the likeness of knights in shining armor. They were grappling with a dragon more formidable than that disposed of by St. George.

These High Court paladins were interposed between the public and the Taxation Monster which, not satisfied with exacting toll from goods sold as new, wanted tribute from anything sold second-hand, third-hand, or fourth-hand. You could see the tax climbing higher than the value of the article.

After an all-day battle the Monster was beaten off. Not killed, of course—no one can kill him—but put out of action for the time being. And in our orisons shall the victors be remembered.

Bringing Back Farthings

MISS RUBY DUNCAN, the well-known Australian Feminist, has made a suggestion to the Bread Commission that farthings should be introduced into the coinage. The idea is that if bread is, say, fourpence halfpenny a loaf, half a loaf should only cost twopence farthing.

This sounds all right at first, but would women really be the gainers in the end?

Farthings, if introduced, would have to be introduced all round, not only just for bread. And one may be sure that where women now pay 19/11½ for a frock, they would then pay 19/11¾.

Comedy—or What?

WHAT did he mean by it, anyway—the Seth Parker captain who just said he was sinking, then that he was trying the effect of a broadcast, and then, after the Australia had moved away, that he really was in trouble, and the boat was "leaking badly"? It is the mystery story of the week.

The American skipper has a good deal to explain. If he has been playing a joke he will find himself about the most unpopular person, next to Captain Kidd, who has yet sailed the high seas. The man who fools a would-be rescuer can't complain if he is left to his fate next time. The worst part of his fooling is that it imperils the chances of future applications made in grim earnest.

One bright ray in this Pacific "thriller" is furnished by the heroism of the Australia's crew in volunteering to man the rescuing boat when huge seas were threatening to engulf the schooner. Nothing make-believe about that!

Over the Air

SOME people are never satisfied. A correspondent writes to a paper complaining of the "mispronunciation" of certain broadcasting announcers. Terrible, isn't it? The individual whose ears are offended by a mispronounced word or phrase is in a minority, however. What most of us object to is something quite different; it is the stereotyped and ultra-correct manner in which some of the announcers put their statements over the air.

The charm of any speech is its naturalness. If this quality is lacking, nothing can make up for it. Anyone having his or her try-out "on the air" can be forgiven for being a bit forced and stilted. But for the professional announcer a stilted manner is without excuse.

Too many of them, in trying to be impressive, strike a note of affectation which is much more annoying than the occasional misuse of a word.

The Patient Sex

OUT of six speakers at a recent School of Arts debate only one was a woman. And by the unanimous vote of male adjudicators she was declared the best of the six. Nothing surprising in that, perhaps, but the remarkable fact was that she claimed a predominance for her sex in three essential qualities—patience, diligence, and concentration—and not one man contradicted her.

Are women more patient than men? Do they concentrate better? If you say "yes" to the first question it doesn't follow that you say "yes" to the second. For grim concentration some men take a lot of beating. A man will concentrate really hard if he thinks it worth his while—witness our students of racing form. On the question of patience, if women haven't more than men they have more need of the quality, as a rule.

A SAILOR from a foreign land serenades onlookers in an Australian port.

Industry and the Birthrate

MUSSOLINI, who is usually upset about the falling birth-rate because Italy is being cheated of potential soldiers, is now wailing about its effect on industry in general.

It may be true, as he says, that many farmers are suffering because there is nobody to drink their milk, but to put back the clock and make the civilised world have large families, as was the custom of other days, is no solution.

Some adjustment must be found which will fit in with the modern idea of the family, not one which is analogous to that of solving unemployment troubles by destroying all machinery.

£7500 Annual Gift to Help Our Education

For some time past there has been quite a mania for forming committees to investigate educational matters. Yet all the time there is a body of specialists in every State who are being paid £7500 every year to help the cause of education, and hardly anybody knows anything about it.

AFTER the visit to Australia in 1929 of Dean Russell, of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, each State formed an Institute for Educational Research. A Council for Educational Research was also formed, consisting of a member from each of the institutes.

AS a result an annual grant for £7500 comes to Australia from America, and will continue to do so until 1939.

Knowing that it is against the policy of the Carnegie Corporation ever to renew a grant, great care has been taken by the council in the administration of its funds. It has capitalised some of its grant into a reserve, the interest on which will enable research work to be endowed in perpetuity. By 1939 it is expected that the reserve fund will amount to £30,000.

That America should have given Australia all this money is most generous, to say the least. But her good deed has not stopped at money.

From three to five well-known Australian educationists are invited every year to tour America, all their expenses being paid.

The Council for Educational Research, with president Mr. Frank Tate, M.A., C.M.G., I.S.O., late Director of Education in Victoria, does three things. It undertakes research work; it assists research workers by making grants, and it publishes reports.

Varied Work

ITS research work, such as standardising arithmetic and reading tests by examining 30,000 children throughout the Commonwealth, is often very valuable.

The assistance it has given to such workers as Mrs. Teunison Wood, who is studying certain aspects of the treatment of juvenile delinquency, and Dr. H. S. Wyndham, who has made an investigation into methods of class teaching, has made it possible for much good research work to be undertaken.

By publishing certain reports, which no commercial house would touch, it has made itself the instrument of giving to the world findings that are, it is true, only of interest to a few, but none the less are important for the lives of everyone, interested or not as they may be.

"The Primary School Curriculum," edited by Dr. P. R. Cole (which is shortly to be followed by "The Secondary School Curriculum"), is a work which would certainly not be a best-seller, though it is certain to prove of benefit when educational reform measures come under discussion.

Qualified Persons

EACH institute does research work on grants from the council, and has a membership limited to fifty. Members must be nominated, and therefore only qualified persons are entitled to receive grants.

Not that everyone would want the grants, for they are by no means the sort of thing to attract the fortune-hunter.

A Carnegie scholar has to spend his time doing educational research, which is not frightfully exciting except to the ardent expert, and no personal remuneration is given over and above the money needed to carry on that work.

The Government certainly recognises the work of the Council for Educational Research in that it seeks its advice from time to time, and encourages the use of its standardised tests in State schools. Yet surely the council's attitude that it is not an instrument for propaganda could be relaxed when it discovers that it is being to a great extent left behind when committees of inquiry and councils of education are being formed, and when hardly anybody thinks of asking its opinion when educational matters arise for controversy.

It is well known that scientists are content to find out answers to problems just for the sake of scientific curiosity. But it seems unfortunate that in this case it should happen at a time when education in Australia is in need of vital reform under expert guidance.—A.W.

FROM SUE TO LOU — **A Bright Girl's Letters**

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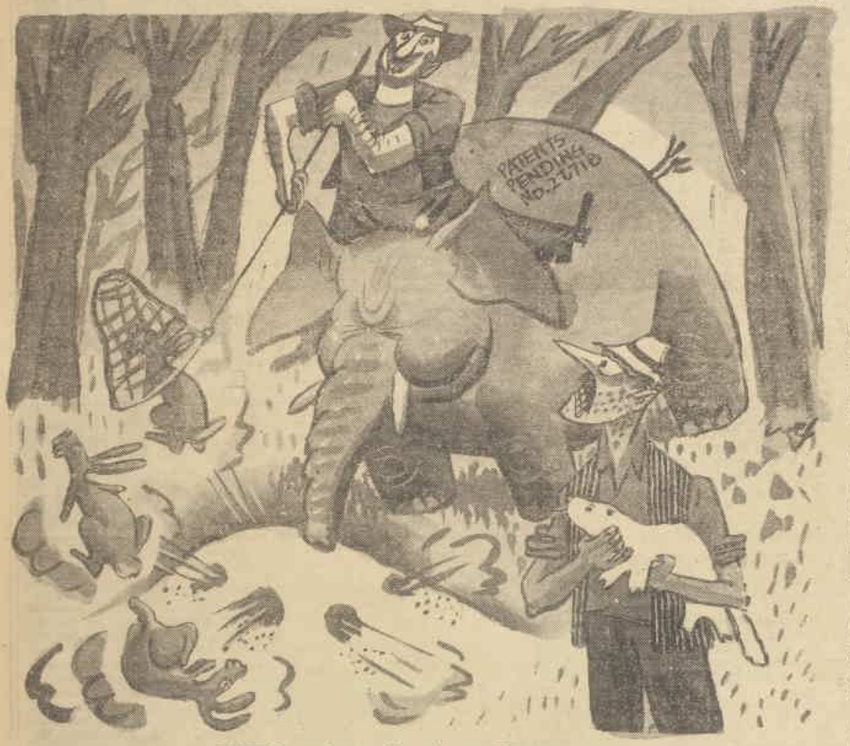
RABBITO! *A'Hunting* WE WILL GO!

L. W. Lower Tries Out the Latest Methods

By L. W. LOWER, Australia's Foremost Humorist.



WEP'S unique idea for rabbit-trappers.

TRAPPING rabbits is one of the most enthralling pastimes there is.

It's not so enthralling for the rabbits, but if ever you're feeling tired of life, go rabbit-trapping. It's marvellous what a lot of things you catch.

THE first night I went around my traps I caught two sheep and four dogs. The next night I caught a rabbit. I worked from four in the morning till four in the afternoon, and by that time I had the thing skinned.

I was covered all over with rabbit, and after I'd collected the pieces of pelt you'd never have believed that a rabbit would have the nerve to wear the thing.

After a week I had a treacle tin full of rabbit skins. It didn't seem quite good enough.

Mind you, there were plenty of the animals about. I had to kick them out of the way to put the traps down, but my traps didn't seem to be popular, or else I used the wrong bait. I decided that I might be better at fencing.

ALL you have to do is to chop down trees and make posts out of them. After that you dig holes for the posts and then you put the wire through them. It's a bit tedious making the posts, but the hole digging is easy. You dig a hole just deep enough for the post to stand up in, and then you go like mad getting the wire on before they fall over.

As soon as you get your cheque you must leave for some other place at once. It's very awkward if the squatter hitches his horse up to one of your posts and the horse wanders off dragging about a quarter of a mile of fence with him.

Of the two, I think I prefer rabbiting. Poisoning them is much easier than trapping. The only difficulty is to catch the little beggars. Another slight drawback is that you get so many sheep mixed up with the rabbits if you're a bit careless with the strychnine.

Or you can send ferrets into their burrows. The ferrets I had were too friendly. I'd put them into the entrance to a burrow and sit down and hope for the best. After a few hours I'd begin to wonder what was a good thing to send in after the ferrets. The only thing I could think of was to keep on shoving more ferrets in until there were so many in the burrow that they bulged out the other end.

It comes a bit expensive when you've got to buy dozens and dozens of ferrets and all you've got to show for it is the hole where they disappeared.

Anyhow, I'm glad I had the experience, because I'm on a sort of sick leave up near the Queensland border and, what with one thing and another, it looks as if I might have to cut my board out in rabbits.

Wep has promised to mail me his pet elephant, Tuffido, who is the greatest rabbit chaser in the world. The last time he took Tuffido out they chased two rabbits from Fremantle to Broken Hill, where the rabbits escaped down a mine shaft, and left Tuffido gnashing his trunk.

THE landlady here is a kindly-looking soul. At least she was when I first got here, but I've known landladies to change overnight, so to speak. Start talking about money, and how a woman's got to live, and keeping your luggage and calling the police.

However, if I can lay an occasional rabbit at her feet and say, "How does that look from where you are? Won't the boarders be pleased!" I may be able to get away with my luggage and character more or less intact.

If you don't hear from me next week, you'll know I'm marooned.

DECEIVING the DEFENCE

in Contract Bridge

By ELY CULBERTSON

World's Champion Player and Greatest Card Analyst

When a duplicate game is scored on a board-a-match basis, a 30-point overtrick very often is just as important as a swing of many more points in rubber bridge.

WHEN you are playing, for instance, in a board-a-match team-of-four game, a difference of 10 points may be as good as 1000.

To-day's hand occurred in the preliminary qualifying round of the recent team-of-four tournament at Asbury Park, N.J. The South player, who was the declarer at a game contract which was absolutely iron-clad, succeeded in winning the board for his team by making five-odd against the best possible opening lead by the opponents. He did this not by stealing a trick himself but by deceiving the opponents in such a manner that they did not take advantage of their opportunities.

South, dealer.

Both sides vulnerable.

	S: J 7 4 3 H: K 9 6 D: A 6 4 C: K J 7	
S: 8 5 2 H: 10 7 2 D: Q 9 5 3 2 C: 5 3	N W E S	S: K Q 10 9 H: J D: J 10 8 7 C: A Q 9 2
	S: A 6 H: A Q 8 5 4 2 D: K C: 10 8 6 4	

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1 Heart	Pass	2 No-trumps	Pass
3 Heart	Pass	4 Heart	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The crux of the entire play came at the very first trick—before the declarer had played from dummy. West chose as his opening lead the five of clubs, the top of a worthless doubleton. The declarer did not quickly play a low card from dummy as a great many fair bridge players would automatically do, but instead stopped to think.

At first glance it seemed possible that the five of clubs was a fourth-best lead. South soon realised, however, that if the lead were a fourth best West must hold the ace-queen-nine, as these were the only three higher cards which remained. Since a fourth-best lead from such a combination against a suit contract is almost inconceivable, South decided that the lead was almost certainly the top of a doubleton.

* * *

IF this were the case, both the ace and queen were marked in the East hand and in addition there was the danger of a third round ruff. South knew that to get a normal or better than normal result on the board for his team he had to do something to prevent this ruff's materialising.

After a few moments' hesitation, he decided upon the winning line of play. He went up with the king of clubs in dummy, and when East won with the ace, he did not false-card from his own hand, but played the four-spot. With the ten, eight, and six of clubs concealed, South realised that East would most probably read his partner's lead as a fourth-best, and that this illusion would be further heightened by the play of the king, as the play of the king with the ace and queen both missing would seem to indicate that the declarer held only a doubleton in the suit and was hoping that the opening lead was from the ace rather than from the queen.

Put yourself in East's position, seeing only the dummy and the opening lead and the declarer's play of the four to the first trick. What way would you have of telling that your partner had opened a doubleton and the declarer had four cards in the suit? East made his natural shift to the spade king, and the declarer, by eventually finessing against East's club nine, was able to make all of the rest of the tricks but the club queen.

At the other table the declarer was not so astute and ducked the first lead completely in Dummy, hoping that the opening leader had led away from the queen. The East player at this table knew then that his partner was leading from a two-card suit, or a three-card suit at the worst, and accordingly laid down the ace of clubs and then permitted West to ruff the third round.

(Copyright)

HOST HOLBROOK says: No sugar is used in brewing my vinegar. I call it Holbrooks' Pure Malt Vinegar.***

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OVERNIGHT RELIEF FOR CONSTIPATION

When the bowels become clogged with a mass of poisonous stomach waste, sick headache with all its attendant misery, belching of sour stomach gases and general discomfort, are sure to follow. You need a mild and gentle laxative, one that will carry off the congested mass without upsetting the stomach or griping the bowels.

TAKE CHAMBERLAIN'S TABLETS

A dose when retiring will afford grateful relief next morning without unpleasantness or discomfort

CHAMBERLAINS TABLETS FOR THE STOMACH & LIVER

"Smoker's Breath"

The way to end it instantly

SMOKERS often fail to realise how unpleasant a "tobacco breath" may be to those around them. Thoughtful people never risk offending others. They carry a little tin of May-Breath that instantly purifies and sweetens the breath. Slip a little tablet in the mouth after every cigar or cigarette. Use May-Breath after eating and drinking as well. May-Breath is convenient to carry and pleasant to use.

1/- AT ALL CHEMISTS

May-Breath

An Antiseptic Mouthwash in Tablet Form

SAFE WAY TO REDUCE

39 lbs. Off—and She Feels Better

"A woman who has found a sure, safe way to lose fat—without freak dieting or dangerous drugs—writes: "A year ago I was eaten up with rheumatism, and was far too fat. I weighed 11 stone, and, as my height is only 5 feet 2 inches, you can judge my appearance. I have taken Kruschen regularly, and not dieted, and now I weigh 8 st. 3 lbs., which is just nice, and, further, I feel better in health and my rheumatism has vanished."—(Mrs.) D. N.

Unlike certain drastic drugs, Kruschen does not aim to reduce by rushing food through the body: its action is not confined to a single part of the system. It has a tonic influence upon every organ of elimination, every gland, every nerve, every vein. Gently, but surely, it rids the system of all fat-forming food refuse, of all poisons and harmful acids which give rise to rheumatism, digestive disorders, and many other ills. You will find that Kruschen builds up remarkable new strength and energy, whilst you are training yourself down to a point of normal weight.

LOBSTER *a la* NEWBURG

Complete Story
. . . By . . .
MARY HOLDEN

TOINETTE staggered to the sink, her slender arms straining beneath the weight of a huge receptacle full of cracked ice, in which five lobsters of startling scarlet were imbedded. Toinette was the underest underling of a low-down Paris cafe which catered for the scum of the Seine-side docks; but "scum" has at times surprisingly well-lined pockets, and "Lobster a la Newburg" was a popular dish at the Golden Monkey.

It was Toinette's job to prepare the lobsters every afternoon. She had the scullery to herself then, and often Meurice would beguile the tedium of her labors by lounging up against the low window directly above the sink and regaling her with the latest tit-bits of Seine-side scandal.

Meurice was an Apache—a real one—not the sort that steps violent dances in baggy trousers and hurls hissing knives at accomplices for the benefit of American tourists in show cellars. No, Meurice was a sure-enough badman, and Toinette was a good little Apache, too, though her seventeen years and comparative lack of experience were against her. Time (and Meurice), however, would remedy that, for Meurice was in love with Toinette, and Toinette, though secretly thrilled to the marrow at such honor, was keeping a cool little head.

Meurice was a "catch"; he was a power in his world, and had a furnished apartment in the Rue des Juifs, though very few people knew of it. He was also known as a "fastidious" where women were concerned, and this, of course, made every woman wild to lasso him.

Toinette was wild, too, but she was also prudent. . . only one couldn't be prudent all the time, and sometimes—at seventeen—one's feminine instincts got the better of one's judgment. At the dance last night, for instance, when London Jim had come upon her alone in a dimly-lit corridor. She had only indulged in the merest flutter of her eyelashes as he passed, but he had stopped instantly and barred her way, drawling in that insolent, English-sounding French of his:

"So it's the little Toinette, by gad, and as pretty a blossom as ever had its roots in the Seine mud." Then, with a sneer: "Any faint stains on our pure petals as yet? Perhaps if one were to look closer. . ." and, keeping his hand on her arm he had screwed his rimless monocle into his left eye and approached his detestable countenance to hers.

Meurice had appeared at this moment and the flash of dynamic fury in his eyes had caused the hair to "creep" at the back of Toinette's pretty neck. But there was a thrill in that, too, and secretly she had licked her lips.

"Get out," Meurice had said, with deadly quiet, "get out, you English rat, before I take your glass window-pane and cut your eye out with it!"

"I hate him and his eyeglass," she had said, "he's always screwing it in and staring at me."

"He won't do it again," Meurice had replied, shortly, and then they had danced. . . danced and danced, hot hands clasped, pink cheek pressed against blue-shaved jowl, palpitating bodies crushed together.

Her thoughts running pleasantly along these lines, Toinette plucked a lobster from its icy bed and proceeded to crack and dismember it.

"Pass us a snack, my girl," said a voice above her, and there was Meurice, leaning over the low sill.

She handed up a succulent claw from which he extracted the meat with a metal toothpick. His face looked brooding and sulky. Silence until the last morsel had been swallowed, then, with a violent gesture he cast the claw to the pavement and crushed it beneath his foot.

"Toinette," he said, "I am here to tell you that I am not going to wait another instant. I love you, ma petite, like a conflagration. I have passed a hell of a night. I am not going to pass any more hells of nights. I am not used to them. I do not like them. You will leave this miserable shanty to-day and come to me at the Rue des Juifs."

Toinette cast down her eyes to hide the sparkle of triumph which she knew shone in them. How all the other girls in the quarter would envy her. She, the little skivvy of the Golden Monkey, to be asked to join the great, the exclusive Meurice at his chic apartment in the Rue des Juifs. No hole-and-corner affair, this. She must not appear too eager, however, so she replied casually:

"You go a little fast, my friend. That may need some arranging."

"Arrange it as you please," returned Meurice, and his black eyes snapped, "but to-night——."

He broke off suddenly for, without the slightest warning, a hand fell on his shoulder and a sharp voice said:

"Meurice Leteller, you will accompany me immediately to police headquarters, there to tell all you know of the death of one James Bevan, alias London Jim, of whose murder you are suspected."

At the word "murder," Toinette bit off a gasp of horror, impelled to self-control by the flash of fierce warning which gleamed for an instant in the black eyes above her. Not a muscle of Meurice's face moved as he turned and looked at the police commissioner.

The policeman put his hand on his prisoner's sleeve, but Meurice, with a sudden swift movement shook it off, and, thrusting an arm through Toinette's window, roughly gripped her shock of dark curls and turned her white face up to his own. A fierce kiss and four murmured words against her lips: "It is all right"—and he was gone.

Left alone, Toinette continued her task. Her mind, of course, visioned a thousand possibilities. Had there been further trouble between Meurice and London Jim after the dance last night? Did "it is all right" mean that Meurice was innocent, or merely that he felt certain that the crime could not be fastened upon him. In any case, such was Toinette's belief in her lover, his last words really relieved her of all anxiety on his behalf. Sooner or later he would reappear in her world and repeat that flattering, that utterly thrilling invitation to the Rue des Juifs.

Musing thus, she finished picking the last of the lobsters, and, collecting the shells, cast them on one side in a ruddy heap. Then she tipped the cracked ice on which they had rested into the sink and turned the hot water tap on it. Slowly the glittering mass melted and dwindled until only a few small pieces remained—until only two small pieces remained, which, curiously enough, did not seem to be affected by the hot stream. . .

Toinette stooped and looked closer, then, with a quick glance over her shoulder, she picked them up and fitted them together. . . the broken halves of a rimless monocle.

"The nerve!" she breathed, almost speechless with admiration, "the nerve; he had it on him, and when he kissed me. . ."

She took out her handkerchief and carefully wrapped up the pieces. Then she hid them in a secret hiding-place.

"In case he is unfaithful to me," she said to herself, thoughtfully.

Toinette was young, but she was a farseeing little Apache and learning every minute. (Copyright)

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RINGS *for* Sale

By PHYLLIS DENHAM

A Charming Short Story of a Girl who Hated Wedding Rings

"HOW I do hate wedding rings!"

As she spoke, brown-eyed Ann Richards gave a tray of rings an impatient little push, and one of them, indignant at such cavalier treatment, jumped out of its snug little hole and had to be rescued from under the counter.

Edie Grant, the blonde assistant presiding behind the silver counter, giggled unsympathetically.

"Got out o' bed the wrong side this morning, didn't you, Ann?" she inquired, polishing her lacquered nails. "You're a lot luckier than I am, you know. Anyone, who comes in to buy a wedding ring means business, while look at poor me. A female in a fur coat, fairly reeking of cash, comes in to look at twenty-first birthday presents for her niece, wastes half my morning turning out my stock, and then goes off saying she'll 'decide later'—and we all know what that means."

"Just the same," declared Ann, pushing back the dark lock of hair which would escape from its pin. "I'd change places with you, any day. The young couples who come in to buy rings are always so utterly fatuous. 'Mustn't try it on, darling,'" she continued in a mincing voice, "'it's unlucky, you know—' Or 'Angela, sweetest, won't it be too utterly marvellous when I put it on that little finger on the day—' And two months later, very likely, they'll be fighting like cat and dog."

"You are the limit this morning, Ann, honest, you are!" expostulated Edie. "Wait till some nice boy wants to buy you a ring; then you won't talk like that."

"But you see——" began Ann. And then suddenly stopped short and busied herself with her tray of rings.

For, if Edie but knew, she already had a wedding ring tucked away in a snug little box at the very back of her undie drawer in her bed-sitting room. And perhaps that was why she so much resented the fatuous look in the eyes of the young couples who came in to buy her rings. Only too well she remembered going with Geoff to buy the ring—"mustn't try it on, darling," she had murmured, "it's unlucky." And Geoff had teased her about being superstitious—"as though anything could bring us bad luck, darling!"

And a week later that little gold circlet had been snuggling—oh, so happily—round the third finger of her left hand and everything had been just wonderful!

And then—well, then things had gone wrong! Even now, Ann found it difficult to understand just why they had quarrelled so much. Of course, they were both absurdly young for marriage, both quick-tempered and fond of their own way. "Rather like a couple of colts not yet broken in," thought this Ann, of five years later.

At any rate, they had quarrelled over the silliest little things, and though at first the reconciliations had made the quarrels seem almost worth while, later it had become more and more difficult to "kiss and make up," and soon the quarrels dragged on for days at a time, both refusing to admit themselves in the wrong.

The final quarrel was over something that should have been a cause for rejoicing. Geoff came home one evening, as excited as a schoolboy because he'd been given the chance to go as manager to a northern branch of the engineering firm he worked for, and had accepted on the spot.

Ann was secretly thrilled, too. But she could not forget that they had had a tiff at breakfast that morning, and Geoff had slammed out of the house without kissing her. He must eat humble pie before she would let him see how pleased she was.

So she put her small nose in the air and said:

"So you closed with their offer at once, did you? I think you might have consulted me first."

"Dash it all, Ann!" Geoff was hurt at the coldness with which his great news was refused. "I thought you'd be as pleased as I was. Don't you see what a chance it is?"

"How do you know I want to leave London, where all my friends are, and go to a smoky old town up North——"

"Of course, if you put your friends before your husband—I might have known you'd take it this way, you can't care two hoots for me——"

"And you can't care two hoots for me—slamming out of the house this morning in a temper, and then coming back as though nothing had happened——"

"So that's what it is, is it? Trust a woman to rake up what's over and done with!"

They were at it again, hammer and tongs. Ann declared she wouldn't go north for anyone. Geoff retorted that he'd not stay in London if he was offered a directorship. Ann said she'd had enough of this cat-and-dog existence. Geoff said how lucky they both felt alike on one subject anyway. Ann took off that pretty little gold circlet (she remembered how hard it had been to tug off!) and flung it across the table. Geoff said he didn't want the darn thing; she'd better pawn it and get some good out of it for once. Ann said nothing in the world would induce her to pick it up. Geoff said it could lie there for ever, as far as he was concerned.

And then at last, Geoff had slammed out of the room and left the flat, taking a few things in a suitcase with him. And that was the last time Ann had ever seen her husband.

There had never been a divorce. They agreed on that in the few letters that passed between them. And Ann didn't want any money from Geoff. She declared she could easily look after herself, and would far rather. So she had gone back to her maiden name (it wasn't so easy for a married woman to get a job) and had worked in this jeweller's shop for nearly three years now.

And the only thing she had to remind her of Geoff was the wedding ring, for, of course, she had not been able to bring herself to sell or give it away. She kept it carefully in its original case, tucked away in her drawer, and occasionally, very occasionally, she brought it out and looked at it and sighed over the wonderful times she had had when it first snuggled round her finger.

One of these days, thought Ann, she'd be bound to hear from Geoff again, asking for a divorce. He wasn't the sort of man, she was sure, not to marry again. But for herself she'd no intention of marrying again, and so it seemed a little ironical that she should spend her days selling rings to other people. . .

AT this moment the shop bell tinkled and a girl came in, rather an anxious, flustered-looking little person, with big hazel eyes and a wistful, appealing little smile. Wants a cheap brooch for a sister, or a five-bob napkin ring for her new godson, decided Ann, who had an uncanny knack of sizing up customers.

But for once she was wrong. The girl marched straight up to her counter and faltered out: "Do—do do you keep wedding rings?"

"Why, yes, madam," Ann could hardly keep the surprise out of her voice, "may I show you some? Gold or platinum?"

"I—er—well, you see," blurted out the girl, "I don't exactly want to buy one. I—I want to know if I can borrow one."

"Borrow one!" exclaimed Ann, while Edie gave a smothered giggle. "I—well, really I don't know, madam; how long do you want it for?"

"Only for one day," stammered the girl. "I—you see—I'd better tell you all about it, then you'll understand. You see, my husband and I have only just been married, and well, I always take off my ring to wash, and—you see, in our flat there's a little sort of hand-basin over the bath, and this evening when I took my ring off, it—it slipped down the pipe between the basin and the bath and—and we can't get it out!"

"I see!" Not for the world would Ann have smiled, she was so very much in earnest, this serious little bride. "But surely a plumber——"

Please turn to Page 28

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Summer Sale—*Last Days!*

SALE ENDS SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23

1 **Pique Locknit** Practical Frock of Pique Locknit, trimmed contrasting shade to tone. Shades: Navy, black, brown, Bdo. S.O.S., O.S., E.O.S. Us., 29/11. SALE 22/11

2 **Georgette** Georgette Frock on Silk foundation. Built on slenderising lines to suit larger figures. Bodice designed self lattice trimming, very smart sleeve. Black only. Sizes, S.O.S., O.S., E.O.S., X.X.O.S. Us., 63/-. SALE .. 49/6

3 **Broken Range** Broken ranges. Rack of smart, well-cut frocks, comprising Printed Marocains, Wind-swept Marocains, Striped Crepe de Chines, Unerushable Crepes; assorted shades. Sizes, S.S.W., S.W., W., S.O.S. Us., 39/6. SALE 21/-

4 **Crepe de Chine** Printed All-silk Crepe de Chine Frock, smartly made, trimmed contrasting shade, which features new neck treatment. S.S.W., S.W., W. Assorted shades. Us., 39/6. SALE, 32/6

5 **Silk Crepe de Chine** Printed All-silk Crepe de Chine Frock, featuring novel cape sleeve, hand-finished at neck. Pretty flared skirt; popular number. Shades assorted. Sizes: S.S.W., S.W., W., S.O.S. Us., 49/11. SALE 35/6

1 **Lockstitch** Slips for Ladies; all wanted shades. W. and O.S. Us., 6/6 Sale 5/11

2 **Milanese** Pyjamas in pastel shades; tuck-in style. S.W., W., O.S. Us., 7/11. Sale 5/11

3 **All-silk Fuji** All Silk Fuji Slip, Duchess insertion vandyked on front and back. Usually 6/11. Sale Price is only 5/11

4 **Pyjamas** Child's Lockstitch Pyjama in pink/blue, peach/rust. 3 to 9. 6/11. Sale, 3/11½

5 **Surf Suits** All-wool Surf Suits. Red, green, royal, and black. Us., 16/11. Sale 9/11
Moulded Aviator Cap. Us., 2/11. Sale 2/3

6 **Exceptional Value** In Ladies' Cotton, and Silk Vests, tube top. Us. 1/4½. Sale .. 11½d

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COLOUR OF HAIR: BLONDE Light ☐ Dark ☐ BROWN Light ☐ Dark ☐ AUBURN Light ☐ Dark ☐ BLACK ☐ "If Grey, GREY" ☐ state type.

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"Private Worlds"—an Unusual and Interesting Story

A story that has for its setting a large mental hospital and concerns no one apart from those resident there would suggest the last thing in morbidity.

But find out for yourself what Phyllis Bottome has made of this material in her most interesting story, "Private Worlds."

THE book has not only an absorbing plot which develops by unexpected turns, but it is a very fine study of human relationships, more particularly of those between men and women who are engaged in the same work. This aspect of the book, more than its conventional love interest, is stressed.

Miss Bottome suggests the survival of sex prejudice in the profession, but only faintly. She admits of no difference in the capabilities of the woman in question, rather otherwise, in fact, but in no sense as propaganda for woman's superiority.

The big mental hospital which the author has used as the background for her story is very modern and up to date. She has described it and its work most interestingly, without too many gruesome details, and with just sufficient case history to give point to her story and to throw her main characters into the right perspective.

* * *

THREE young psychiatrists are the chief figures. Of them, the woman, Dr. Jane Everest, is the most interesting. She stands alone, literally as well as figuratively, and the reader's attention is not diverted from her as an individual unit.

Dr. Alec Macgregor had a young bride. Dr. Charles Drummond had a sister, and both are obscured at times in their family relationships, as they intrude on the story.

Jane was of the calm, clear-thinking type, with an independence of spirit, great ability, singular courage, and a reasonableness that is not usually attributed to her sex.

But she was not entirely Jane the doctor; she was essentially feminine in her outlook and interests. Her girlhood lover had been shot for cowardice during the Great War, which had also robbed her of her three brothers. She was not interested in men as potential husbands, but she found them admirable colleagues, and worked most harmoniously with them.

* * *

THE appointment of a new superintendent to the hospital started all the trouble that Miss Bottome has worked into so good a story.

Dr. Alec Macgregor, one of the resident psychiatrists, was a candidate for the post, and when he was passed over for Dr. Charles Drummond, a man whose qualifications were much the same as his own, he gave way to the greatest possible jealousy and prejudice.

Jane had worked on an equality with Alec, and, in fact, he owed a great deal to her wise judgment, without being conscious of it. They were, in addition, the greatest of friends, a friendship that marriage had not interfered with.

She was bitterly disappointed at the appointment of Dr. Drummond, and not entirely at ease on her own account, for the new superintendent was known to be opposed to women doctors.

Dr. Drummond was a capable superintendent and, although realising the antagonism all around him, he did not let it interfere with his work.

But the atmosphere was bad. Alec's reactions almost brought about a tragedy, and involved other people in a course of behaviour that was unreasonable and opposed to their own interests and happiness.

In fact, the behaviour of the three people most concerned, and of Alec in particular, was just as unreasonable and difficult to understand as that of some of the poor lost minds to which they ministered.

Miss Bottome suggests this train of thought early in the book, and again near its conclusion. The difference between sanity and madness is only slight. "It is only the difference between switching over a point from one side to the other," she states.

Fortunately, the injunction "Physician, heal thyself" was put into effect, and the three psychiatrists gave themselves a dose of their own medicine, with good results.

The story ends happily for all concerned, and leaves the reader not only gratified on this account, but richer in knowledge of human nature and human problems.

(Heinemann. Our copy The Roycroft.)

OLIVER BALDWIN, son of the Rt. Hon. Stanley Baldwin, novelist, dramatist, and scenario writer. It is said that he dreamed the first two acts of his play "From Four Winds."

SHORT REVIEWS

"GOD'S CENTURY," Blair Niles. It is not often that a powerful historical novel contains such a stirring love interest as is displayed in this book, "God's Century."

But since love and war are strong instincts in mankind, the author has taken them as ingredients, and, blending them with fact and fiction, has woven them into a delightful romance.

It is a story of Spanish exploration during the sixteenth century in Guatemala, with its saints and tyrants, deeds of daring, sacrifice, cruelty and renunciation, its conquests and birth of new races.

The central figure is Paluna, a beautiful, laughter-loving child, who is daughter to an adviser to the King of Quiche. The reader follows her life as she grows into womanhood, loving and loved by Leon de Gonzales, a high-born Spaniard, who has gone to the New World in search of adventure.

There are moving passages picturing the clash between the Christian world as represented by Spain and the pagan world of the Quiche.

While underlying it all is the undying love of Paluna, and her efforts to keep pure the blood stream of her own race.

The reader follows Paluna into old age, marvelling at her great gift of courage that sustains her through many difficulties and trials. (Hutchinson. Our copy Swains.)

* * *

"THE SILENT DIVISION," O. E. Burton, M.M., M.d'H. "This is in no sense a book of fiction, but one of facts, and of the reaction of a kindly soul to his experiences as a front-line Digger." So says Major-General Russell in his foreword to this interesting book, which recounts the exploits of New Zealanders at the Front, 1914-1919. Mr. Burton is the author of "The Auckland Regiment," which was so well received. (Angus & Robertson. 6/-.)

* * *

"SUNBURST," Berta Ruck. A romance with a red-haired girl as the heroine. Patricia Roberts was the daughter of Margaret Stone-Steadwell who disgraced herself by marrying her father's chauffeur. The stuffy, snobby family "did the right thing" by their child upon the death of her parents by sending her to a decent school. The story opens with the intrusion of Pat into the Stone-Steadwell family. She was a lovable, beautiful girl, but without malice, and quite unconsciously she sent all their plans awry. The story has many amusing features, and a strong love interest. (Hodder and Stoughton. Our copy Swains.)

"SKYLIGHTERS," J. B. Morton. The author has chosen a rather well-worn theme—a "stunt" religion—but he has written of it amusingly, with some caustic tilts at ordered society and established institutions. "Skylight," the religion in question, was introduced into England by an ex-criminal in search of a new way to make money. A chance meeting with a man whom he had known in gaol gave him his opportunity, and he blackmailed this man, now a leading business magnate, into financing his schemes. A readable story, but not to be compared with others from the same author. (Heinemann. Our copy Swains.)

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(Each Tuesday and Saturday at 8.5 p.m.)

FROM THE NATION'S STATION **2GB**

FATTY FINN! The best-loved character who has ever come to life in juvenile papers. The new colored FATTY FINN'S WEEKLY will be on sale for your kiddies each Tuesday. Don't let them miss it!

WHO'LL SAY *They Are Not* POPULAR?

Mrs. Stelzer and Her Ten Thousand Proofs

Are women announcers on the air popular with women listeners? From time to time male announcers declare "women are a failure," and since the B.B.C. continues to discourage women announcers, it may be worth while to quote the case of Mrs. Stelzer, of 2GB.

MRS. STELZER

MRS. STELZER can boast a guaranteed audience of 10,000 listeners. They are the members of her Happiness Club, who are pledged day in day out to listen to her session.

Letters show that many thousands of listeners outside the Happiness Club tune in regularly to Mrs. Stelzer. But that is not the point.

The success of the Happiness Club has been a great surprise to Mrs. Stelzer. A trained singer and pianist, and a well-known entertainer in the war days, she visualised no such response as this when, in October, 1929, she suggested to her listeners that they form a Happiness Club. Before she had left the air that afternoon there were many phone calls from enthusiastic listeners.

So, through a period of five years, the Happiness Club has grown to a membership of 10,000 women. It has 52 branches in Sydney and Newcastle and the South Coast, and a sister club in Adelaide. There is no membership fee, and the only obligation is to spread happiness and help the less fortunate.

Mrs. Stelzer herself is largely the reason for the club's success. "Why shouldn't women be a success on the air?" she asks.

Success, she admits, entails hard work and many hours of toil when others are taking their rest. But her motto is, "One is never so busy that one can't find time for something else."

And, putting the whole thing in a nutshell, she will tell you that women feel distracted from their work during the day when a man is talking continually over the air. They feel they've got to sit down and listen to him as though they were entertaining a visitor, but when a woman announcer is chatting to them they can go on with their work, knowing that, being a woman, she will understand.

Gladys Moncrieff to Give Talk

On Her Travels

BY special arrangement with Dorothea Vautier, The Australian Women's Weekly's special announcer at 2GB, Gladys Moncrieff will be introduced to listeners on Friday next, at 3.30 p.m.

Gladys Moncrieff

MISS MONCRIEFF, who is one of Australia's most popular stars, is opening in a new show, "The Jolly Roger," at the Criterion next Saturday.

She will give a talk on Friday, specially for The Australian Women's Weekly listeners to 2GB, on her travels abroad.

AT fourteen, she says, by force of circumstances she began a long period of travel. She lived in many parts of the world, and so acquired a knowledge that was to prove very useful in later years.

ON Monday, 25th, at 11.45, Dorothea Vautier will give you "An Australian Girl's Impression of Java," introducing Javanese dance numbers.

In Java there are good Dutch shops and dressmakers and tailors. Bombay shops with lovely attractive things . . . china, carved ivory, and silks, while the Chinese shops and bazaars are particularly fascinating. Whenever you enter one of these shops you are presented with a fan, a custom which should prove popular in Sydney during the summer time.

Features of the Week From 2GB

SATURDAY (February 23).—4.0: Kathleen Jordan—Artists at Home. 7.30: The Original Astrologer of the Air. 7.45: An Evening With Darby and Joan.

SUNDAY.—12.45: Famous Composers — Johann Strauss. 1.45: Highlights of "Rigoletto." 3.10: Matinee Recital. 3.30: Diggers' Session. 6.30: Feature Sessions.

MONDAY.—10.45: "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," a George Edwards production. 11.45: Dorothea Vautier—People in the Limelight. 12.15: Richard Want, B.A., Child Psychology. 4.30: The Criminal Barrister. 7.0: Chandu the Magician. 7.50: "Kidnapped."

TUESDAY.—1.45: The Storyteller. 2.45: Radio School of Domestic Science. 3.30: Dorothea Vautier — Musical Personalities. 6.20: Favorites Old and New. 6.35: "The Sweetest Music This Side of Heaven," with George Edwards.

WEDNESDAY. — 6.35: "Once Upon a Time." 8.45: Harry Bloom's Tango Orchestra. 9.0: Jack Lumsdaine, Radio Rascal.

THURSDAY.—1.45: The Storyteller. 5.45: Stories of Nurunderi. 8.45: Songs of the Morning—Lance Jeffree. 9.15: "Lady Elizabeth's Letter."

FRIDAY. — 1.45: The Storyteller. 8.0: St. David's Day Music. 8.45: Shipmates — Cyril James.

During Childhood

Lay the Foundation for a Healthy Skin by Regular Use of

CUTICURA
Soap and Ointment

Never too young to start using

CUTICURA
Best for You and Baby Too

FOR SALE

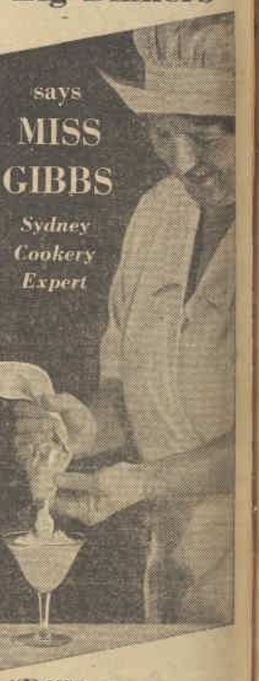
FREE TO FIRST 100. 1 PAIR SILK STOCKINGS FREE to every purchaser of 1 parcel containing 1 jar QUIRK'S FOOT SALVE, 1 pot COLD CREAM (5/-, post free).

This offer is made to popularise these products, which are tried and proved by thousands of users.

QUIRK'S PRODUCTS,
350 PITT ST., SYDNEY.

"Have Fruit Junkets with Big Dinners"

says MISS GIBBS
Sydney Cookery Expert



"DON'T ever serve a heavy pie or pudding at a dinner party. Your guests have enjoyed the soup, entree and joint—they want something light to finish! There isn't anything nicer than an ice-cold Hansen's Fruit Junket for such occasions."

These new Hansen's Fruit Junkets are equally good as the basis for any light meal. Get a bottle of Hansen's Fruit Essence to-day—and try this Junket that is so new and different and economical. You'll love it!

HANSEN'S
Essence for making
FRUIT JUNKETS

Flavours, colours, and sets *in a minute.*

TRAVEL TO THE LAND OF *Sweet Dreams* IN

O.B. Leader

SHEETING
IT'S A CESARINE PRODUCTION
Finest Quality . . . Fully Bleached and Guaranteed for 5 Years.
Twill or Plain: 54in., 2/6 yd.; 64in., 2/11; 72in., 3/3; 80in., 3/11; 90in., 4/2.

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Some NEW LAUGHS

Conducted by..... L. W. LOWER

"Most jokes were old and mellow when we were seventeen. When we are old and mellow, they'll still be evergreen."

HUSBAND: Do you remember the doctor who ten years ago gave me eight weeks to live?
WIFE: Yes, a nice man, but you couldn't rely on his promises.

"No wonder he's mad! Why, it'll take more'n a plumber to get him outa that!"

DETECTIVE: So you're on the level now?
EX-CONVICT: Yes, but it's an uphill climb.

"I'll tell you your fortune, sir!"
"How much?"
"Half-a-crown."
"Correct!"

INSPECTOR: I'm pleased to say your scales are absolutely correct.
GROCER: Gosh, they must have gone bung!

Are You Bashful?

Shy or Nervous?

Are you timid? Self-conscious? Afraid of meeting people? Liable to blush, stammer, and become confused, just when you would like to make a good impression?
Do you worry over trifles? Are you gloomy or depressed, or FEARFUL regarding the future?

Come Out of Your Shell!

STOP BEING SHY! You're missing half the happiness and enjoyment of life if you are handicapped by a shy, nervous, or worrying disposition! Banish your fears! Overcome Shyness and Blushing! Conquer that "Inferiority-complex!" Be a LEADER — not merely one of the LEAD! This amazing FREE Book will show you HOW!

Be POPULAR – MAGNETIC

You can MAKE people like you. You can be Popular with the Opposite Sex! You can attract Love, Friendship and SUCCESS into your life!
Yes, you can develop Self-confidence, Will-power, and a strong, fascinating, MAGNETIC personality—if you read "Nerve Strength and Personal Magnetism," the amazing book of personality secrets now offered FREE to readers of this paper.

A "Strange" Book

Truly, this is a "strange" book! It seems to cast a mysterious spell over the reader; and, gradually, as you read it, you become aware of a wonderful feeling of confidence and power, as the magnetic forces within you are awakened and subordinated to your Will. You MUST see this amazing book—read it—learn its great secrets—FREE! Send no money—just the Coupon—and it will be posted to you, absolutely free, by return mail.

Personality Secrets Revealed!

This Amazing Book Tells You:
How to cultivate a Strong, Magnetic Personality.
How to Dominate Others.
How to Overcome FEAR and "Inferiority-complex."
How to Conquer Shyness and Blushing.
How to Strengthen the NERVES.
How to Fascinate the OPPOSITE SEX.
The Secret of Success.
The Truth about Love and Happiness.
—And many other Amazing Secrets!

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Only 500 copies are available under this FREE Introductory Offer; so make sure of YOURS by sending NOW! Post the Coupon to: HENRY GALVEN, George St., Sydney. (Box 160, G.P.O.) The Book will be forwarded, absolutely FREE, by return mail.

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Please send me your big book, "Nerve Strength and Personal Magnetism," absolutely FREE. I enclose a 2d. stamp towards postage, etc.

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(Mr., Mrs., or Miss)
Address .....
..... State .....W.

Brainwaves

A Prize of 2/6 is paid for each joke used.

"ARE you going to the party?"
"No. I'll be out of town that week-end."
"I wasn't invited, either."

MOTOR SALESMAN: What type of car do you like, sir?
Visitor: None of 'em. I just came in here to enjoy being among a few that I don't have to jump from.

OLD LADY (visiting prison): And what is your name, my man?
Prisoner: 119, Madam.
Old Lady: Oh, but that's not your real name.
Prisoner: No, only my pen name.

JONES: Have you realised any of your youthful ambitions?
Dad: Yes. I used to long to wear long trousers, and now I wear 'em longer than anyone.

"WHERE did you get all that money?"
"Borrowed it from Wilson."
"But I thought he was pretty tight."
"So he was."

ZOO KEEPER: Yes, Miss, he's a man-eater.
Bertha: Oh, how terrible. Couldn't you feed him on something else?

JOE: Have you and your wife patched up your quarrels yet?
Bill: We don't patch 'em up. We get new 'uns.

AN Irishman received a letter from his sister saying she had a new baby.
"Is it a boy or a girl?" he was asked.
"That's what's been bothering me. They did not say in the letter and now I don't know whether I'm an uncle or aunt."

Does this Weather Upset Your Liver and Digestion? If so, take a course of

DR. MORSE'S INDIAN ROOT PILLS

MADE IN AUSTRALIA

Under the present trying climatic conditions the Liver becomes sluggish, the bowels irregular, and the whole digestive system disorganised, with the result your head aches and you feel generally "washed out." To overcome these distressing symptoms, try a dose of Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills for a few nights in succession, and then note the difference. *They Make You Feel Brighter.*

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What Women Are Doing

Another Success Abroad

ANOTHER Australian, a Sydneyite this time, Helen Ray, has just had a successful appearance in London, appearing in "Merrie England."

On Melba's advice she went off to Europe some ten or more years ago, studied in Paris with good results, then appeared in opera in Paris, Biarritz, and Deauville.

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First Railway Dietitian Begins Work in Victoria

THE Victorian Railways has acquired the first woman dietitian to be appointed by railway authorities in any part of Australia or New Zealand, in the person of Miss Betty Wilmot.

Miss Betty Wilmot —John Scott Simmons.

The actual appointment took place a year ago, but Miss Wilmot does not begin work till March 2. The intervening year has been spent doing a course of dietetics under Mrs. Fraser Smith at St. Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne.

Miss Wilmot is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Wilmot, of Corowa, N.S.W. She was educated at the Melbourne Church of England Girls' Grammar School, and was resident at Janet Clarke Hall while working for her Bachelor of Science degree at Melbourne University.

She intended continuing her studies in bacteriology and bio-chemistry, but the railway appointment altered all that.

What the control chemist is to the factory, Miss Wilmot will be to the refreshment branch of the Railway Department. She will scientifically investigate and test all the food and drinks served in refreshment rooms in town and country, in drink stalls, and on trains, and will also supervise the women on the refreshment staff.

Later on she hopes to try out a plan by which it will be possible for regular diners at the refreshment-rooms who are on a diet to obtain the exact food prescribed for them by their doctors.

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Strangers Only At Her Wedding

IF anybody had told Miss Joan Noreen Higgins a few weeks ago, when she left England for Colombo to take up a secretarial job, that the beginning of February would see her settling down to being a farmer's wife in South Australia, she would probably have laughed aloud.

But that is just what has happened to her. She met Mr. Herbert Hedges on the Hobsons Bay on her way to Colombo, and before a fortnight they were engaged to be married.

Instead of getting off the boat at that port, Miss Higgins was married there in the Captain's cabin in a neat little frock that was included in her luggage from London. The ship's crew and passengers were the only people present. A clergyman on board married them; two passengers acted as bridesmaids, and the ship's purser as best man.

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The Trio Who Guard Titania's Palace

TITANIA'S Palace, the miniature marvel designed by Sir Neville Wilkinson, to raise money for crippled children all over the world, is never left by its devoted guardians.

Always, one of the two charming English women who have been with it for years is watching over the palace and gently moving on the eager crowds who stand for hours to see it.

Miss Hilda M. Leslie has travelled with the palace for nine years, three of them in the United States; and Miss Frances A. Hills for five years, that included journeys through South America, England, Scotland, Ireland and Holland.

Miss Hills was superintendent of the general staff at the Royal Herbert Hospital, Woolwich, during the war, and at that time Miss Leslie was secretary to General Sir R. E. W. Turner, V.C. Since then, she has been chairman of the Niger Company, but relinquished that post to begin her travels. It will be a good many years before either of these women settles down in any one place again.

While in Sydney, they acquired an assistant in the person of Miss Jean McKillian, who is well known in North Sydney as a Ranger.

Tasmania's First Woman Barrister

IN the thirty years which have elapsed since the barrier against women practising in the Court has been removed, Tasmania has had no women barristers. The honor of being the first woman barrister has fallen to Miss Nancy Hallam McPhee, who was admitted to the bar of the Supreme Court of Tasmania on February 6 at Hobart. The application for her admission was granted by Mr. Justice Clark.

Miss McPhee is a popular and charming girl in her early twenties. She is the eldest daughter of a former Premier of Tasmania (Sir John McPhee) and Lady McPhee, and was educated at leading public schools and the University in her native State.

New Zealand Delegate For Conference

MISS AMY KANE, who was entertained last week by the New Zealand Women's Association, Sydney, is the only representative of her country to be sent to the conference of the International Alliance of Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, at Istambul, Turkey.

Miss Kane is well qualified for this important mission, and was instrumental in organising the N.Z. branch of the International Alliance and Women's Suffrage, of which she is now the chairman.

Miss Kane is also a member of the Wellington Hospital Board, on the committee of the Plunket Society, and the Unemployed Women of New Zealand.

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Will Show Films of Theosophical Convention

BRINGING with her lots of enthusiasm and some very interesting films, Mrs. W. Crawford, wife of the general secretary for New Zealand of the Theosophical Society, is paying a visit to Australia. Although her stay will amount to only a few weeks in all, including travelling, Mrs. Crawford intends to fit much into that time, including the showing of her film at the Theosophical headquarters, The Manor, Mosman, Sydney. She is brimming over with news of the Congress of the Society at Adyar, which is about eight miles outside of Madras, where she has been with her husband and son.

The film Mrs. Crawford has brought back with her is of scenes from the congress, and the crowds of people from all parts of the world attending it. It also depicts some very lovely scenery and buildings around Madras. Upon their return to their home, Mrs. Crawford will accompany her husband on a tour of New Zealand, where she will show her film, while Mr. Crawford will give lectures about the congress.

Lady Snowden to Lecture On Tasmania's Beauty Spots

WOMEN'S activities in the mainland States will shortly be privileged to hear lectures, illustrated with films, depicting the delightful scenic beauties of the island State of Tasmania, consequent upon a recent decision of the Tasmanian Government to appoint Lady Snowden to the staff of the Tourist Bureau of that State. Lecturing to women's societies on the mainland, it was stated, would be the main activity of her work.

Lady Snowden, as the wife of the late Sir Eccles Snowden, during his term of office as Agent-General for Tasmania in London had a good deal of experience as an ambassador for the attractions and beauties of the island State. In addition she has a charming personality and is an excellent speaker. Before going to London about 19 years ago, she was Mayoress of Hobart.

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Reaping Reward of Hard Work and Courage

BILLED as a Chinese diseuse, Rose Quong has just had a real success in America. Back in London again she is about to fulfil many engagements there and in the provinces.

With this Australian-Chinese actress success has been the result of real hard work and much courage. In Melbourne for many years Miss Quong was a member of the Gregan MacMahon Repertory Company, and went off to London full of high hope.

Lady Bell, mother of Lady Stanley, wife of the then Governor of Victoria, took the young Chinese girl under her social wing. But it took years for Rose Quong to really "get there." Now she is high up, going higher all the time, which shows that when real talent is there it gets recognition in time, if its owner can "stay the distance" with courage.

Darling Downs Adopting Y.W.C.A. Caravan Scheme

MISS AMY SNELSON, of London, who was the general secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association, and who has also been working for the same cause in Melbourne for the past 18 months, is spending a week or two in Toowoomba, with the object of initiating the Caravan Scheme, suggested by Miss Dorothy Heighway at the National Convention held in Melbourne last October.

The idea of this scheme is to take the service of the Y.W.C.A. to the smaller towns on the Darling Downs, and to be known as the Darling Downs Y.W.C.A. Caravan Club.

The honor of being the only place in the world where such a scheme has even been suggested has fallen to the Darling Downs. Miss Heighway, who was the first honorary secretary of the local branch, has now been appointed general secretary of the Darling Downs Area of the Y.W.C.A., and Miss Dora Skov, of Brisbane, has been appointed activity secretary for Toowoomba.

Miss Snelson will leave at the end of the month on her return journey to England.

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Pony Breeder Inspects Our Riding Schools

MISS BERYL HUTCHINSON has a riding school of her own in the New Forest in England, so she is interested to visit some of Sydney's horse-riding clubs and schools. It was an impending breakdown in health that urged her to take a trip to Australia, but now that she is here, she has decided to make the most of her fortnight—for that is as long as she will be here.

Her New Forest Riding School is, unlike those in Australia, residential, and is visited mainly by children whose parents are abroad during the school holidays. She herself will get back to England just in time for the Easter school vacation. Miss Hutchinson breeds her own horses. She crosses the little New Forest ponies with thoroughbreds, and the results are excellent polo ponies, hacks or children's ponies. Although her groom is a man, she has women to do the "more intelligent work," as she puts it, such as horse-breaking, training, and teaching.

However, she keeps an eye on everything herself. On her property of about 100 acres is a large house, which she lets to an elderly woman, who looks after the residential horse-riding pupils. As the women on Miss Hutchinson's staff are all training to become riding teachers, and as there are many such schools in the New Forest, it seems evident that the teaching of riding is considered quite a popular career for girls in the Old Country.

A Thousand Miles Up the Amazon on Luxury Ship

THE mention of a thousand-mile trip up the Amazon through impenetrable jungle conjures up pictures of all kinds of hardship, but when Miss A. Cresswick and her niece, Miss Hazel Martin, did it, there was no hardship involved.

Miss Hazel Martin —Broothorn.

They made the journey on a 7500-ton ship, in company with some 50 other tourists. The ordinary shipboard life went on as usual in spite of the humid heat. Though they saw no wild animals peeping out from the Brazilian jungle, and because the river was in flood many missed seeing a crocodile, the brilliant birds made up for that.

Miss Cresswick came straight home to Melbourne, but Miss Martin remained a while in Ceylon, where she stayed with friends on a rubber plantation in the Kelani Valley. The bungalow was built on top of a hill 200ft. high, and 350 steps had to be climbed every time anybody wanted to reach it.

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A Hundred Interests on Her Golden Wedding Day

FEW women can boast of so many interests as Mrs. John Downing, of Ivanhoe, Victoria, and boast of a golden wedding day achieved as well.

When she and her husband celebrated fifty years of wedded happiness the other day, the Victorian Housewives' Association, of which she has been vice-president for 18 years, gave her a morning tea party and presented her with a gold-mounted fountain pen and pencil.

This amazing woman has been 30 years a member of the National Council of Women, a member of the executive for 22 years, and secretary for 7 years.

Mrs. Downing was one of the four women on the Victorian War Savings Committee.

She is honorary secretary of the Victorian Baptist Women's Association, is on the council of the Australian Women's National League, and is honorary secretary of the Victorian Women's Christian Temperance Union.

In addition to all this, she finds time to grow her own vegetables and fruit. Kitchen gardening is her hobby.

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Englishwoman's Interest in Children's Leisure Hours

BECAUSE she has been so closely connected with the playing centres for children in the more thickly-populated parts of England, Miss Mabel Willing intends to inquire very thoroughly into the way Australian kiddies spend their leisure hours.

This wide-awake young woman, who is a B.A., holds the Diploma of Education, and is a graduate of Leeds University, will, for the next twelve months, be attached to the Methodist Ladies' College in Melbourne, as junior mistress. She has arrived in Australia on the exchange of teachers' plan, and occupies the post of Miss Joyce Mitchell in Melbourne, while Miss Mitchell is at Haberdashers Askes Girls' School, New Cross, in place of Miss Willing.

Giving the juniors something to occupy their time to the best advantage out of school hours is apparently one of the biggest problems with which schoolteachers and welfare workers have to contend in England, and Miss Willing has been asked to pick up any tips she can in Australia for the benefit of the English Play Centre children.

IN *and* OUT *of* SOCIETY --- By WEP.

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Mandrake the Magician

The week's thrill . . . . . Alive after 7000 years of death.

The finest picture-serial of them all . . . . . Magic and Adventure.

THE CHARACTERS IN THIS GREAT FEATURE:

AMBASSADOR VANDERGRIFF: Who has been robbed of important documents by

THE COBRA: An arch-criminal of magical powers and head of a world-wide organisation. On The Cobra's trail is

INSPECTOR SHELDON: Of the U.S. Secret Service, who is accompanied by

TOMMY LORD: His assistant, and

BARBARA: His daughter. On the voyage, the party escapes many perils only by the help of

MANDRAKE: The Master Magician. The Cobra's deadly enemy. With

LOTHAR: His Nubian slave, Mandrake is intent on destroying The Cobra and his minions. All arrive at Tejei when trouble is experienced at first with

PRINCE SAUD: Ruler of the country. Mandrake turns the Prince into an ally, but just as this is accomplished The Cobra retaliates by sending down on Tejei a plague—The Flying Death. Mandrake proposes to use black magic to combat the evil.

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As modern as 1935—automatic... round-the-clock service . . . no waiting or delay . . . no intricate mechanism . . . a full-bore flow at every tap. That is what the new Gas Automatic Storage Hot Water System means to you.

We will instal this 4-point thermostatically controlled system for £30 cash—or on easy terms. You'll like this system—this automatic system that takes care of itself and supplies steaming hot water for an average cost of

20 gallons per day (140°F)		9/6	per month
30	" " "	11/6	"
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Come and see these Modern Hot Water Systems with automatic control. They are as dependable as the day and cost less than others to run. 'Phone M 6503 (Hot Water Section) and our experts will gladly furnish free information and advice.

At your service always

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SYDNEY'S *Glad Hand for* NEW GOVERNOR

His Visitors' Book will be the Most Popular One This Week

This week brings to Sydney our new Governor, Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven, and preparations which have been under way for months past for his welcome will at last reach their fruition.

But, as well as these official welcomes, it is almost certain that the brand new visitors' book at Government House will show at the end of the first day that many people, from Society with a capital S to those who have nothing much perhaps to offer except loyalty, have flocked to pay their first respects.

PLANS have long been laid for an official welcome at the landing-place, when Sir Alexander will be introduced to certain leading citizens.

As well as finding a host of ready-made friends, Sir Alexander will find that thoughtful preparations have been made to have his new home in perfect order.

As it was very fully re-decorated just before the visit of His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, there has been no need to "spring clean" Government House very drastically.

Even though Lady Game did choose a certain amount of the refurnishings last year, the Government always had in mind the fact that Lady Game would not be making her home in Sydney much longer, and planned their renovating schemes on lines that might be expected to please any future Governor, and his wife.

Popular in S.A.

SO popular were Sir Alexander and Lady Hore-Ruthven as the Vice-Regal representatives in South Australia that when they left, the miles of road between Adelaide and Outer Harbor were thronged with people, cheering and waving. When the boat finally drew out, women everywhere were weeping. Any greater test of the love of South Australians for the departing Governor and his wife would be hard to imagine.

Their popularity lay in their great-heartedness, their sympathy for the poor and suffering, and their eagerness to do all they could to help the distressed.

There was no mission they did not visit, no deserving cause they allowed to pass unnoticed. Lady Hore-Ruthven was often known to hand over a little parcel of clothing to the officials of some charitable concern, whispering: "I made them myself. I do hope they'll fit somebody." Often these same officials would be surprised with a visit from her, and she would say in her quiet, undemonstrative way: "Did you know there was a family in such-and-such a street with only bags for covering at night? But be careful; they're very proud!" Finding herself with an hour to spare, Lady Hore-Ruthven would go out in an unofficial capacity to seek out cases of distress that officials had missed—and she found many. It is no wonder she and her husband were loved so by their people. This quality is bound to endear her to the people of N.S.W., too.

Sir Alexander was Chief Scout in South Australia, and Lady Hore-Ruthven was chief Guide. They visited camps and special meetings all over the State, and built fires and helped with the cooking, or did other odd jobs at camps wherever they went.

Sir Alexander's work for ex-service men was colossal. He regularly attended Sunday night concerts for Toc H, paid many visits to the unemployed camp at Kultpo Colony, and through his work the Y.O.C. (Youth Occupation Council) that is doing such good work in providing educational occupation for unemployed boys and girls was founded.

THE Vice-Regal pair made a gracious host and hostess. They did not hold many big entertainments, but those they did hold were such a success they will be long remembered in Adelaide.

South Australia's former Governor loved horses. He attended races almost regularly, and he joined in the annual Adelaide Hunt Club hunt to hounds at Buckland Park each year. He is an excellent rider, and few people look finer on a horse than he; he took the jumps with the most practised of horsemen.

Lady Hore-Ruthven is very fond of music, and attended most recitals given by visiting artists; almost without exception such artists were entertained at luncheon at Government House.

Great was the jubilation of the pair when their son, Pat, arranged to visit them in Adelaide, and while he was here he was seen continually with them. Lady Hore-Ruthven admitted that she felt being parted from him more than she dare think about, and it was for that reason that the popular pair were pleased to return to England some time ago.

RHEUMATISM

Watch those First Sharp Twinges of Pain, and TAKE ACTION NOW!

Almost before you are aware of your peril, you may find that Rheumatism has you in its merciless grip, and the result is not pleasant. Don't let Rheumatism conquer you. Don't hesitate and waste precious time while the ailment get a firmer hold upon you, but go to your chemist now and get a box of De Witt's Pills—the remedy that has been successfully used in all parts of the world.

You cannot choose a better remedy. Read this remarkable letter sent us by a grateful user. Then ask your chemist. He will tell you that De Witt's Pills contain ingredients which will prove beneficial in cases of rheumatic trouble.

You may think your case is too far advanced for De Witt's Pills to help you. Don't make this big mistake. If rheumatoid arthritis has already distorted your limbs you cannot expect a cure, but De Witt's Pills will ease your pain and possibly check the progress of the disease. Going to the other extreme, you may think you can do without De Witt's Pills because you only experience rheumatism in a mild form occasionally.

DON'T BE DECEIVED

Those early symptoms need attention, and you will be acting wisely if you get a box of De Witt's Pills from the chemist at the first opportunity. The cost is trifling, and surely it is worth while taking one or two pills when you know that by doing so you will enjoy better health now and ensure freedom from pain in years to come.

Watch for such symptoms as *puffiness under the eyes, heaviness of the limbs, swollen feet or ankles, foul breath, scalding pains, gravel or stone.* These symptoms usually precede attacks of Rheumatism, Backache, Lumbago, Sciatica or serious Kidney Trouble, and much suffering and expense may be saved by quickly getting a box of De Witt's Pills from the chemist and taking them as directed. Sold only in the blue, white and gold boxes, price 3/6, or larger, more economical size, 6/6.

Mr. M. Preston, of 193, Elizabeth Street, Redfern, Sydney, N. S.W., says: "I cannot speak too highly of De Witt's Pills. I can honestly say they gave me instant relief. Having suffered for many years from kidney trouble and rheumatism, I tried a large number of remedies without result, until I gave De Witt's Pills a trial One bottle was sufficient to show results, but I continued using them until my trouble had completely gone."

De Witt's Kidney & Bladder Pills

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A lot of things can cause a headache or other pain, but there is one thing that will always give you relief! Just take a tablet or two of Bayer Aspirin. Your suffering ceases. Relief comes instantly, regardless of what may have been making your head throb with pain.

Bayer Aspirin is harmless—cannot depress the heart. So there's no use waiting for a headache to "wear off." It is useless to endure pain of any kind when you can get Bayer Aspirin tablets. It is a blessing to women who suffer regular systemic pain; to men who must work on, in spite of eye-strain, fatigue or neuralgia.

Learn its quick relief for colds; for neuritis, rheumatism, lumbago.

All chemists sell genuine Bayer Aspirin in boxes of 12 tablets, also in bottles of 24 and 100 tablets—the Bayer Cross trade mark appears on every tablet. Bayer Aspirin costs no more than the uncertain imitations and loudly advertised substitutes which physicians would not think of prescribing. Say Bayer and insist because Bayer means Better.

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Each week £1 is paid for the best letter, and 5/- for every other letter published on this page.

Pen names will not be used, following the decision of readers given in the poll taken on this page recently.

IMPORTANT!!

Letters sent to the "So They Say" page should not exceed, on an average, 120 words. Remember, brevity is the soul of wit! Entries should be interesting and provocative.

Please endorse each one "So They Say."

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

NO mother should attempt to be her daughter's chum, for both their sakes.

Unless the mother has an arrested mental development she will crave the stimulus of contact with her peers, and the girl most certainly deserves, and should be forced into, the company of her young contemporaries.

The mother's more unselfish love and the tact and charm of her social experiences may furnish an atmosphere more flattering to the developing girl than the cruder companionship and keen rivalry of schoolgirl friends, but the woman who robs her daughter of these dear, harsh, growth-compelling contacts is unfitting her for life.

£1 for this letter to Miss J. Wilson, 66 East Terrace, Henley Beach, S.A.

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TABLE MANNERS

I AM surprised to see so many, otherwise, well-bred men and women really ignorant regarding table manners.

For instance, quite a lot of people are seen in homes and restaurants holding their spoons, forks and knives in most ridiculous positions. When cutting meat, etc., the knife handle is held up between the thumb and forefinger, instead of under the thumb, and so on.

Table manners and fashions change, I suppose, like everything else, so I'm sure the "Etiquette hint" in The Australian Women's Weekly will be doing most of us a good turn by giving a few illustrations in just what is correct in table etiquette.

J. Kimber, Yuill St., Glenelg, S.A.

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"JUMPING THE RATTLER"

OWING to the depression, the number of women swaggies has increased, and it was recently discovered that by "jumping the rattler" some of them are causing the railway authorities not a little concern. It is believed that a number of destitute women are travelling on trains in typical "hobo" style, and in some quarters have even been found hiding in trucks. No doubt the introduction of heavier penalties for those found "jumping" trains will have the desired effect. Just the same, it is a sad reflection on officialdom that unemployed and homeless women should be forced to "jump" trains and take to the road.

Rose Ross, 471 Nicholson St., Nth. Carlton, N4, Melbourne.

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DRESSING-ROOM

FAMILIARITY breeds contempt, is an old saying, but a very true one. When a young couple cannot afford a house big enough to allow of the husband having a dressing-room of his own, there is no privacy left them.

In the morning when tempers are seldom angelic, what could be more annoying (that is, unless you have a delightful sense of humor) than to have a mere male groping on all fours on a stud-hunting excursion, or turning everything upside down looking for a wayward suspender?

Perhaps there are quite a few wives with a small spare room that they could turn into a dressing-room for hubby. A comfortable armchair, writing desk, and a man's wardrobe are all he really needs, and would save them many little annoyances, and the discomfort of an untidy room, and I am sure a man appreciates a room of his own just as much as a woman.

Mrs. K. Daunt, 51 High St., Lutwyche, Brisbane.

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MORBID BOOKS

THE first book that I opened at the circulating library to-day commenced in this manner:

"Aurelie hung from the ceiling of the kitchen with the rope around her neck and gently swayed in the breeze. She had been dead since dawn . . ."

Ugh! Such books might certainly appeal to some people, but it seems to me that, leaving the censor out of the matter, they do not add anything to a world already overfull with sorrow.

Give me the books to cheer me on my way. What do the other readers think?

Mrs. E. M. Smith, 229 Mica St., Broken Hill, N.S.W.

Annoying Habits at the Picture Show!

ALTHOUGH some picture-theatres have gone as far as to screen a request for no talking by patrons during the filming of a picture, this annoyance still persists. Considerate persons would keep their opinions concerning the picture to themselves or at least wait till the show is over. Again, there is no way of seeing the screen through two heads placed close together, and the person behind is compelled to move continually from side to side, thus causing annoyance to those in the back row. One can ask for a hat to be removed if it is in the way, but it would be peculiar to request that a couple keep their heads apart. Not only that, but in nine cases out of ten a person will squeeze through a whole row of seats when they could easily have walked a little further along the aisle. I am not a "wet blanket," but say, "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you."

Miss Gwen Fulton, 8 Silver St., Marrickville, N.S.W.

What Do They Go For?

IT'S time something was done to stop people talking so much when they go to a picture theatre.

Many a time a good picture is spoilt because the people behind insist on talking, or maybe they have seen the picture before, and want to let everyone know all about it. They have no consideration for other people who pay for a night's enjoyment.

I was at a band contest in the city a week ago, and had to move to another seat because three people sat behind and talked the whole time. One wonders what they went to the contest for.

Mrs. Nellie Thompson, 101 Mort's Rd., Mortdale, N.S.W.

EDUCATIONAL, TOO

HAVE any other readers stopped to think what an education The Australian Women's Weekly is? Take, for instance, the maternity allowance. I, for one, was not aware of those facts, and the Old Age and Invalid Pensions Act, mentioned a few issues ago, was something I did not know. I wouldn't think of reading anything like that in the daily papers, but there is not much I miss in The Australian Women's Weekly.

Mrs. B. L. Mark, Wolvi, via Gympie, Qld.

Why All the Fuss Over Modern Bathing Costumes?

I QUITE agree with Miss Roberts (2/2/'35) that this controversy over a few inches of bathing costume is ridiculous.

One sees girls in less than that on screen and stage, and where's the difference?

What I object to is the skirtless bathing costume—a far more ugly fashion than the brassiere-trunks style, though hardly worth the publicity that is given to things of such minor importance.

Miss E. M. Strachan, Public School, Koorawatha, N.S.W.

Not Decent

I FAIL to agree with Miss Roberts (2/2/'35) that the decency or otherwise of bathing costumes receives too much attention.

It is surely time for the Government to intervene when youth oversteps the bounds of modesty.

To-day it is the fashion to sneer at the decencies of the past, but are they not preferable to the near-decencies of the present-day beach wear?

Miss Hilda Luke, Warren Rd., Marrickville, N.S.W.

Very Narrow-minded

MISS DAGMAR ROBERTS strikes a right note when emphasising the prominence given to trivial matters while subjects of greater importance are disregarded by the public. What should prove of real interest to the community is not the scantiness of modern bathing-dress, but the narrow-mindedness of certain people in denouncing our beach styles. These modern times call for modern apparel, and people should not disapprove of the perfectly healthy attire of our equally healthy-minded youth. Extreme and bizarre fashions are to be found in any form of dress, but, happily, these are confined to the minority, and never do become popular with the majority.

Mrs. L. Stanton, North Street, Cleveland, Queensland.

We're Going Backwards

YES, I am just one more person who thinks that far too much fuss is being made about the present-day bathing costume.

If the department concerned would spend the money on constructing shark-proof nets instead of employing men to see that one has three inches on the leg of his or her bathing costume, the money would be spent to a much greater advantage.

Miss M. Stewart, 44 Muston St., Mosman, N.S.W.

It's Little Things that Count in Married Life

YES, it IS quite a relief to get some of the rifts in the lute of married life off one's chest (W. B. Smith, 2/2/'35). Here are some of mine:

That "grunt" for an answer when hubby is immersed in his paper.

That missing helping hand when getting out of car or tram.

Leaking taps, broken chairs, etc., crying aloud for attention.

The irritatingly calm acceptance of your most thrilling piece of gossip!

Mrs. Alfred Hoare, Bishop's Knoll, Sir Thomas Mitchell Rd., Bondi Beach, N.S.W.

Happiness Destroyers

A NAGGING wife; tired and weary husband returns from work to be met with a scowling face and endless complaints. When visitors are present, wife tries to show her authority by ordering hubby about. Such treatment soon reduces a man either to a confirmed, henpecked fool or to seeker after other attractions away from home.

Sulkiness on part of husband or wife causes much unhappiness, too. "Never let the sun go down on your wrath" is a good motto to live up to, and insures happiness in the matrimonial sea of adventure.

Mrs. W. Scheuermann, Box 29, Pialba, Qld.

Forgetting to Post Letters

I HAVE noticed: A wife's lack of reticence in discussing her husband's affairs; her extravagance; her lack of thought for his dignity in front of the children; taking advantage of his good-nature and love for her.

A husband's untidy ways; his lack of notice when she "dolls up" or when she is tired and consequently peevish; his forgetfulness in posting letters or delivering messages—important to her; his carelessness in leaving razor blades about; and ringing up from the office to say he won't be home to dinner.

Mrs. R. White, 6 Myall Avenue, Kensington Gardens, Adelaide.

TEN NEW... COMMANDMENTS

A WELL-KNOWN clergyman recently said that the Ten Commandments mentioned in the Bible could be added to, by at least another ten. It would be interesting to know what other readers would add. Here are mine: 1. Thou shalt remember the value of time; 2. Thou shalt remember that patience is a virtue; 3. . . . that economy is wisdom; 4. . . . that cheeriness is always worth while; 5. . . . that success only comes with perseverance; 6. Thou shalt not forget the power of kindness; 7. . . . . the worth of character; 8. . . . . the dignity of simplicity; 9. . . . the obligation of duty; and 10. . . . the influence of example.

Mrs. V. Patterson, Nash St., Sandgate, Qld.

The Second Cup of Tea

YES, I do think that if readers sent in their "confessions" of the little things that mar an otherwise happy marriage, good results would ensue.

Rift No. 1: That second cup of tea that hubby seems to regard as wifey's sacred duty to supply him with.

Rift No. 2: The wireless set. The programme hubby seems to regard as his solemn duty to select nightly.

Rift No. 3: Those weekly accounts that he expects always to be "paid in full," no matter how small the wage he has been able to hand to his wife.

E. M. Knight, 236 Anzac Parade, Sth. Kensington, N.S.W.

Points for Happiness

WITH reference to W. B. Smith's suggestion in her letter (2/2/'35), I have found that these add to happiness in marriage:

When hubby comes home from business always to find all household duties finished, and a tidy, fresh-looking wife awaiting him; clean, well-behaved children; the gift of being able to give in instead of carrying arguments over small things too far; the gift of being a good listener, although not always interested; a perpetual smile.

Mrs. L. Knox, 3 Mill Hill Rd., Waverley, N.S.W.

TRIFLING ACCIDENTS

HOW often we observe trifling things that display in rank and file alike that we are all possessed of an incurable inferiority complex inasmuch as our self-possession will desert us at certain unavoidable occurrences. Even our well-known business and public men, able to face big issues daily, display a lack of poise should their hat blow off or they fall in a busy thoroughfare. One is impressed with their desire to remain unknown to the onlookers and probably they would prefer a desert island temporarily to a city street. And a woman whose attache case opens and all her accessories are strewn around—what self-consciousness she displays! If accompanied by a friend, how often she finds the friend ir need missing, also actuated by a desire to be as inconspicuous as possible. What a reflection on our sense of humor this is, as, I presume, its origin arises from the fact that our predicament is a source of amusement to others.

Miss A. Walsh, Clewley St., Corinda, Qld.

ETIQUETTE

DON'T CONFUSE the purpose of ash-trays and teacups.

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BREAKFAST IN BED

THERE is one thing that I cannot bear, and that is breakfast in bed. I know that there are any amount of women, and men, too, who think that it is the height of luxury, but how they can is quite beyond me. Early morning is the best time of the day, and to rise to a good brisk sponge or shower, to sit down to breakfast, however meagre, in a fresh and sunswept room is the most glorious way to start a new day. How can one stay in a close bedroom amongst crumpled bedclothes and fiddle around with a tray! Only a film star may wake to the sound of sweet music with not a hair out of place, nor a pillow crumpled.

Remember what Robert Browning sang:

"The morning's at seven,
The hillside's dew pearled,
The lark's on the wing,
The snail's on the thorn,
God's in His Heaven,
All's right with the world."

Do you think that that was written after a breakfast in bed? I don't.

Miss Edith McHugh, 10 Drummond St., Belmore, Sydney.

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A MORAL STORY

MANY years ago my little son became possessed (lawfully) of a pea rifle. One day, while playing, he caused temporary injury to one of his playmates. By way of punishment and to make certain that there would be no chance of a similar accident he was deprived of his valued pea rifle and forbidden to have another or anything of a similar nature. The lesson was taken to heart and a sense of responsibility and consideration deeply planted in that little boy.

Recently I read in the paper where a certain big boy who had become possessed (lawfully) of a motor car, while on pleasure bent, caused permanent injury to one of his fellow citizens. By way of punishment and (presumably) to make certain that there would be no chance of a similar accident he was fined two pounds and was not allowed to play with his motor car until his license expired—three months.

The moral of whicl little story is that all motorists who cause injury to their fellow citizens should not only be fined, but, instead of their license being temporarily cancelled, they should have their motor cars permanently taken from them, just as we deprive children of toys when they prove irresponsible and a source of danger.

G. Cherry, Box 1742, G.P.O., Sydney.

Screen Oddities

By CAPTAIN FAWCETT

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GRAND *Hopes* for NATIONAL *Grand* OPERA...

But Good Local Artists Must Get First Chance

Some enthusiastic and, we fear, unduly optimistic souls have asked the Federal Government to retain the Fuller Grand Opera Company as a national organisation.

Subsidised opera at low prices, as enjoyed in certain countries overseas, is an attractive idea.

Officially the Fuller Company does not admit of any negotiations with the Government.

THE proposals were made following discussion in Sydney about the possibility of retaining the services of Maurice de Abravanel, who has done wonders as principal conductor. A first suggestion was that this maestro be given the task of moulding and directing a national symphony orchestra.

After a shaky start in Melbourne, Sir Benjamin Fuller's company has been attracting music-lovers in Sydney. If a return season in Melbourne succeeds, it is probable that other States and also New Zealand will hear the company in due course.

Maurice de Abravanel naturally and deservedly secures a large portion of the limelight, but there is a figure behind scenes whose contribution is no less notable.

Without the production of Charles Moor, regarded by many people as one of the most experienced operatic producers Australia has seen—and to be frank we haven't seen many—we doubt whether the Fuller operas would have brought forth the undoubted brilliant patches which have marked the season.

Apart from his knowledge of opera scenery and costumes, Mr. Moor has to understand and undertake a host of other duties, and his task in Australia has not been made any easier by the fact that there is not a stage in the country which is really suitable for grand opera.

MUSIC OF THE WEEK

MR. BEN WILLIAMS, the Welsh tenor, whose versatile performances have been a feature of the Royal Grand Opera season.

Opera Is Money

IT is now becoming a well-known fact that the success of the Fuller Grand Opera Company has not been up to expectations.

Sir Benjamin Fuller has not attempted to keep it a secret, and in Melbourne he laid the blame on the "Centenary spirit" which apparently, in his opinion, was too frivolous for grand opera.

If we are to have opera in Australia as a permanent institution, the fullest inquiries should be made into the qualifications of any one company offering itself as a nucleus, and every effort should be concentrated on using some of the very good artists living in Australia.

Under the guidance of experts, who know opera through and through, it is quite propable that a national opera scheme would be successful.

Australian Basso

RAYMOND BEATTY is back in Sydney after a most successful tour of the New Zealand broadcasting stations. Admirers of his fine bass voice and his splendid singing are glad of his New Zealand success, for Raymond Beatty is one of the few artists who turned down the possibilities of a career in London and America in order to take a part in the artistic development of his own land.

No one begrudges artists success overseas, but one must regret the selfishness of those who do not give their country the benefit of their art until such a time as they are well past their prime and their reputations are waning. One of Mr. Beatty's first appearances since his return will be from 2GB on Tuesday, February 26, at 8.45 p.m., when he sings "Three Folk Songs."

Eileen Joyce Succeeds

IN a letter to her friends in Sydney, Eileen Joyce, who has achieved such amazing success as a pianist in the past year, speaks warningly to those who are meditating a descent on the Empire's capital.

In spite of her success, she finds it hard to forgive and forget the six hard years she spent in search of fame. There were times, she admits now, when she not only went hungry, but despaired of ever getting the chance she was waiting for. She knows now that for the few musicians London makes, there are many more that it breaks.

In our wonder at the general adulation that has been showered on her, we are apt to overlook the unique quality of her playing—the precision of her fingerwork and the clarity of outline. At times there seems a danger of mechanical perfection triumphing over the interpretation, but with each new record she makes, she shows an increasing depth of feeling.

A number of these records will be featured in the matinee recital from 2GB next Sunday, February 24, at 3.10 p.m.

Choir Boys Praised

PRAISE for our choir boys has been voiced by Dr. Sydney Nicholson, founder and director of the School of English Church Music, now back in England after a tour of 33,000 miles, during which he gave 217 lectures.

Expressing pleasure at the success of his visit to Australia, Dr. Nicholson said that he had found exceptionally good choir material among boys. Despite enthusiasm for church music, this was not fully appreciated.

Apropos of choirs, Melbourne is now considering a proposal made by the secretary of the Australian Choral Association (Mr. M. J. Pettigrove) that the Centenary choir of 3500 voices should assist in closing the Centenary celebrations with a musical festival in the Exhibition building. Such a festival should receive ardent support from both choirs and the public.

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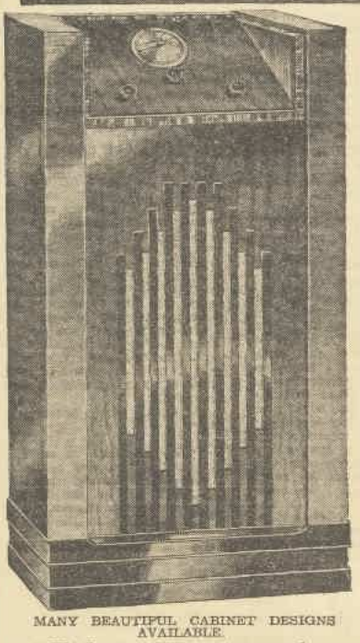

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WEAVER'S STORY *to* WOMEN'S WEEKLY!

Staggering Charges by Ex-Minister Should Be Fully Investigated

The sensation of the month has been the ousting of Mr. R. W. D. Weaver from the post of Minister for Health in the New South Wales Government.

Women are vitally interested in the administration of the Health Department, which controls all public hospitals, baby clinics, and maternity homes, as well as the important matter of pure food and milk supply.

For this reason The Australian Women's Weekly approached Mr. Weaver and asked him to make a definite statement of the position for the benefit of our readers.

Neither political nor B.M.A. considerations should enter into vital matters of public health, and the charges made by Mr. Weaver below call for immediate and full investigation.

By R. W. D. WEAVER in an exclusive interview

"WHEN I entered the Health Department it was the Cinderella of Government, and I found in many departments, more particularly in regard to hospitals, a policy of laissez faire possessed the whole arena. I then determined on a close investigation of all hospitals throughout the State.

"I was appalled at what I saw and learned. In many instances medical men were charging patients in public wards of hospitals. This meant that beds were being occupied by hospital patients who were paying their medical men, and frequently no bed was available for the indigent patient, who should be the first consideration of the hospital.

"I found that extravagance prevailed in the purchasing of provisions and drugs and sundries, to such an alarming extent that business methods were practically neglected.

"I found that pauper records were not kept in many institutions and that a more or less easy-going fashion was the governing characteristic. I also found to my amazement and disgust that nurses were not housed in many cases as well as draught horses, and this was the position in many large hospitals in wealthy towns.

"I found also that as many as six nurses occupied one bedroom and slept on one verandah with their beds touching one another. They had not the ordinary privacy of a sundowner.

A Virile Race

"I POUND that there was very little regard paid to preventive medicine. It became apparent to me that a large proportion of the common diseases of every-day life—both medical and surgical—were the results of a long and continued neglect of the elementary laws of health, and that too little attention was given, both by medical men and by boards of directors, to effective means of prevention. This made it obligatory that much more attention be directed to the principles and practice of preventive medicine.

"We have only touched the fringe of this, and the tremendous number of patients, both indoor and outdoor, who are now demanding attention at our hospitals, should cause us to ponder seriously as to whether we are building our nation on sound lines.

"It is obvious that if we are to have a virile race we must have clear minds and bodies, and it is also clear that many of our young people are compelled to carry through life impediments and physical imperfections which could be relieved if taken in time.

"My objective has been to increase the health of the people as the first basis of strengthening the capacity and development of our nation.

"With this end in view, in spite of the marvellous results of our baby clinics, and somewhat closer attention to maternity cases, I endeavored to increase the treatment in those avenues, with the result that our baby clinics have practically doubled during my term of office, and I was taking definite steps, as far as possible, to reduce still further the death rate, and sometimes the crippling, without death, of the mothers of the race.

"My experience of the general practitioners is that they learn their lessons after qualification, and yet I found that there is no law in this country to prevent a young student, who has just gained his diploma, buying a practice anywhere in the country, before he has even performed a single operation.

I consider there should be a law preventing it. If there were not enough hospitals to cope with the annual increase of young doctors in the profession, it was my intention to make Prince Henry Hospital and other Government institutions post-graduate hospitals where graduates who were unable to obtain hospital experience could get it.

"In most cases students do obtain positions in local hospitals, to enable them to have one or two years' practical experience, but I have had instances—far too many—of young medical men gaining their first experience at the expense of the patient, without having the guiding hand and advice of the senior surgeon, as would be the case if he got his first experience in a public hospital.

"I consider it scandalous that such men should be allowed to operate upon members of the community without having the slightest knowledge of such operations in a practical way.

"Although a layman, I hold the opinion that the curriculum of the University for the training of the students, particularly in regard to maternity, is 20 years behind the times.

"A much closer supervision, more lengthy experience, and closer training should be instituted in all matters relating to maternity.

More Health Centres

"I consider that special attention should be given to preventive treatment so as to catch the trouble in its early stages and completely eradicate it wherever possible. There should be an increase in the number of our baby health centres for the teaching of young mothers and assisting them in both the ante-natal and post-natal periods.

"With regard to the accommodation of nurses the difficulty has been largely overcome in almost every hospital in the State because I insisted upon a single room being made available for each nurse.

"By this means we will have fewer people in our asylums, fewer people drawing the invalid pension as early as they do to-day, and we will be able to establish a physical strength, virility, and improved mental outlook by repairing those who are suffering in the early stages of their trouble.

"The fact that I am no longer Minister for Health is almost entirely due to my effrontery, presumption, or stupidity in attacking that powerful body known as the B.M.A.—or perhaps I should say members of the B.M.A.

"I dared to differ with some of their methods and some of their ways, although I have acknowledged over and over again the splendid devotion many of them give to their duty.

"I did discover flaws in their ways in some directions, and in the public interest I decided that it was my obligation as Minister for Health to remedy those defects. My supreme mistake has been that I have placed the interests of the community before the interests of the powers that be."

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Hitherto the services of an eye specialist have been available only in the public hospital, or by private consultation at the usual specialists' fees. To provide for those people not wishing to go to a Public Hospital, and who are unable to afford the private fees now charged, Gibb & Beeman have organised a service for medical treatment of the eyes, at a moderate fee, by an Oculist, late of Moorefields Eye Hospital, London.

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"Do you remember when we first met in the revolving doors at the post office?"

"Yes, but that wasn't the first time we met."

"Well, no; but that's where we began going around together."

"REMINDING" *Wives Court* TROUBLE

... Advises Louise Mack!

The wife who is always "reminding" her husband courts certain trouble.

Yet there are many who have the idea that their husbands' brains cannot function unless they are supplied with a constant stream of reminders.

THE ritual is something like this:

You haven't forgotten to-morrow's rent day, have you?

Don't forget those lettuce seeds.

Don't forget that John is calling to see you to-day.

Don't forget to call at the Gas Company.

Don't forget to fill in the electoral rolls paper.

Don't forget you're meeting Mr. Browne to-morrow about the land.

And so on, ad infinitum.

Of course we have long ago accepted and forgiven the wife who always says "Don't forget your umbrella" and "Don't forget your overcoat," because we know that the heart of woman is speaking.

But the other things, the never-ending stream of fussy, unnecessary consequential interferences, those don't spring from a woman's heart, they spring from her nerves—her silliness.

NOTHING annoys a man more than to be reminded by his wife of something he has not forgotten.

A wife's constant nagging at that one theme, "Don't forget!" produces a sort of mental acidity in a man, combined with a terribly dangerous hardening of the heart against the very woman he has vowed to cherish, love, honor, and support.

In fact, I honestly believe that many a man has grown to almost dislike his wife because she would keep on reminding him of the things he was just about to do.

"DOLLY" writes: "I am twenty, and a business-man's secretary. My employer is curtly dismissing me next week because I reminded him of his income tax returns. 'Thank you. I have enough of that at home. I can dispense with your services.' It seems so unfair. What do you advise?"

* * *

Well, Dolly, I advise you not to remind your next employer of anything unless he asks you to.

Better let him say to you, "Why didn't you remind me?"

Then, with perfect tact, you might answer, "I didn't think it was my place to do so!"

To which he will probably reply, "Quite!"

And then he will begin to realise what a treasure of a secretary you are, and presently he will ask you to remind him of various things, as he has such a heavy pressure of work just now that he might forget—of course he might!

You see, a secretary is not a wife.

That is to say, the secretary is only there pro. tem.—the wife is there for always.

Week after week, month after month, and year after year, the wife and he have got to dwell together, living through all manner of big and little experiences together—always together.

Peace and harmony are absolutely necessary if that close union is to prove successful.

But peace and harmony can never be attained in a house where the wife is for ever anticipating her husband's own affairs. She is taking his manliness away from him. She is making him feel a fool. And that, of course, is Danger Point.

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of this annoying wifely habit is that it gives a man a loophole of escape.

A man is only a man, after all. He is not Jehovah. Nor is he Pluto. He is just man.

And one of the peculiarly manly attributes of a man is a desire to be taken care of plus a desire to be left alone.

A man wants to forget sometimes that there's always the woman in the house.

He needs to blot her right out simply because he has occasional overwhelming longings to muse and dream and plan and reflect alone. This masculine mood was very dramatically expressed once by a beautiful young English poet, Rupert Brooke, who died at Lemnos in the flower of his youth.

Rupert describes a man who wanted to be alone and suddenly the spell was broken by a woman mouthing platitudes beside him.

"You came and quacked beside me in the wood.
You said, 'The view from here is very good.'
You said 'It's nice to be alone a bit.'
And 'How the days are drawing out!' you said.
You said 'The sunset's pretty, isn't it?'
By God! I wish—I wish that you were dead!"

MIND you, it's a perfectly harmless affair, this little wifely habit of constantly reminding the husband of this or that when there's no need for him to be reminded.

But so is a drop of water harmless, yet think of the damage one drop of water after another can do to your nice front steps, turning them brown and mouldy and depressing-looking, till the leak in the verandah roof is mended, and the little drop is put out of action, when the steps assume their normal cheery appearance.

So will your husband when you stop reminding him of the things he was taking particular care to remember!

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The FUTURE of ST. ANDREW'S Cathedral!

Removal Question May Be Settled Next Week

The question that has been agitating Anglican Church circles for years—the removal of St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, from its present site in George St.—is again in the fires of controversy.

A meeting of the Synod has been called for next Monday, and it is expected that a definite decision one way or another will then be reached.

THE ST. ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL of the present day replaced this temporary structure, which was first opened in 1836. Buildings in George Street are shown in the background.

BUILT IN 1819 under the supervision of Edmund Blacket, a noted architect of the day, when the population of Sydney was a mere 7000, the Cathedral has seen a great metropolis grow up around it.

Up till 40 years ago the historic building had proved commodious enough for all the needs of the church, except on special occasions. It was the City Railway Scheme, first under consideration in 1915, that started the question of removal. Opinions have been sharply divided ever since.

In 1926 Dr. J. C. Bradfield announced that a strip of land, 10 feet wide, belonging to the Cathedral grounds, would have to be resumed for railway purposes.

There was strong objection from the Church authorities, and Dr. Bradfield then decided that the 10 feet of land fronting George Street could be dispensed with if he were allowed to acquire a strip below the surface of the ground.

Mr. Lang's Offer

THIS proposal, too, met with strong opposition, and eventually Mr. Lang, then Premier, offered on behalf of the Government to resume the whole of the Cathedral property and to give the Church authorities another site on Church Hill, and to allow the sum of £500,000 as compensation for the removal, with a stipulation that that sum of money should be expended on the new Cathedral.

ALTERNATE sites for the erection of the new Cathedral were discussed, including the land on which the Mint is built in Macquarie Street, the Conservatorium site, the land on which the Mitchell Library is built, and the Supreme Court site in King Street.

The Anglican Synod would not agree to remove the Cathedral to any site other than to the land occupied by the Mint in Macquarie Street, and eventually an agreement was come to between Mr. Lang and the Synod on the terms mentioned.

The Lang Government went out of office in 1927. When the new Premier, Mr. T. R. Bavin, was confronted with the terms of the proposed agreement between Mr. Lang and the Church, he not only refused to ratify it, but declined to submit the matter to Parliament for consideration.

Special Meeting

THE matter has remained in abeyance ever since, and a special meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney has been convened for Monday next (February 25) to discuss the whole matter.

It will be interesting to see what happens. The Church people have been almost equally divided between those who object to any interference with the present building and its site, and those who think the time opportune for removal to a quieter spot, with more room for expansion.

It was recently announced that the Civic authorities intend to spend £100,000 on extensions to the Sydney Town Hall, and as such extensions can only be made on the side adjoining St. Andrew's, the proposal may have considerable influence on the decision of the Synod in the matter.

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Magistrate: Why did you break a vase over the Chinaman's head?

Irish Sailor: He was after threatenin' me in broken English, so bedad, Oi replied in broken china!

☆ ☆ ☆

It was pouring with rain, and little Betty was sitting disconsolately at the window, waiting for the rain to stop so that she could go out to play.

"Why must it rain, mummy?" she asked.

"To make things grow, dear," her mother replied; "the flowers, and fruit and vegetables."

"Then why does it rain on the roads and pavements?" asked the little girl.

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COFFEE SPONGE SANDWICH

1 cup flour
1 scant cup sugar
3 eggs
1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon Tillock's Soluble Coffee Powder
4 tablespoons boiling water
1 teaspoon Aunt Mary's Baking Powder

Beat eggs well, add sugar and beat again. Sift in flour with baking powder and coffee powder added. Melt butter in boiling water and add, mixing well. Bake in sandwich tins 15 to 20 minutes in moderate oven. Spread coffee icing between layers and over top of sandwich. Decorate with walnuts or almonds.

Make Coffee Icing as follows:

Dissolve 2 teaspoons Tillock's Soluble Coffee Powder in boiling water. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in boiling water, add 8 ozs. icing sugar and beat well together.

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A recent portrait of Joan Crawford.

"I'M COMPLETELY HAPPY" *says Joan Crawford*

During an interview on the set of "Chained," her latest picture to be released in Australia, Joan Crawford spoke of the radiant content that now possesses her. When the interviewer made reference to the obstacles that she has had to overcome, she said: "Obstacles? What obstacles? I'm completely happy, so happy I'm almost anxious about it. If there were any such things as obstacles, I've managed to forget about them."

HER enthusiasm for work is one of the reasons for Miss Crawford's buoyancy. She is entirely absorbed in it, while she is making a film. And she is not one of those players who take a long vacation between pictures. Presently we are to see her in "Forsaking All Others," in which she appears with Clark Gable and Robert Montgomery.

But besides this faculty for absorption in her regular work, which has been noticeable in her from the start, there are additional causes for the satisfaction with life which she now expresses.

"I don't think of myself as a successful person," was her comment, "but rather as a girl with a job, a rather tough job which she loves. That I've managed to keep the job is important, of course.

"But real happiness has come from other, simpler things. My home, for example. It's really a very beautiful place, and I've taken a great pride in achieving something with it. It's pleasant to return to, and pleasant to think of when I'm away."

The Crawford mansion has recently been remodelled and redecorated throughout. A private theatre, bath-house, swimming-pool, and badminton court have been added to its amenities.

"Singing is another thing," she continued. "I can't begin to tell you the deep satisfaction I've gained from voice culture. I'd rather miss dinner than my daily lessons."

More important still, it appears is the prospect of experimenting in the little theatre in her own backyard.

"Even the preparations are exciting," she said, smiling. "I devote all my spare time now to studying plays with an eye toward their adaptability to the limited stage. I've never had any stage training, you know, because you can hardly count chorus work in New York, can you?"

Asked whether, if she were satisfied with her results in this new medium, she would go to the legitimate stage and leave the screen altogether, she said:

"No, I love it too much. Pictures are my life and I'd never be happy away from a studio. But to combine work here with the stage, that would be ideal."

Struggling Childhood

SO you have the Joan Crawford of to-day. It is interesting to follow her upward climb to the position she now holds in her profession, to which she has attained through ability and sheer hard work, spurred on by a single-minded keenness.

One can discern plenty of those obstacles and hardships, which she poohpoohs now, in her early career.

She was born in San Antonio, Texas, but her parents moved, when she was a baby, to Oklahoma. Her father, Henry Cassin, owned and managed a chain of theatres there, and so the child, called Billy by the rest of the family, was nurtured in the theatrical atmosphere.

HOWEVER, when she was seven the family moved to Kansas City, and there young Billy was placed in a convent. She hated the restrictions of the place, for she was not allowed to dance and the stiff gingham dresses seemed to her so drab. But she put up with it bravely. When a year later her father and mother separated, she voluntarily went back to the convent school, working in the kitchen in return for her keep, since her mother could not afford to pay the full fees. And one accomplishment she learned there which she still practises, that of fine stitchery.

Later on her mother, who was working in a department store in Kansas City, sent her, greatly rejoicing, to a private school, where the routine was less bleak, though young Billy here, too, worked for her board, looking after the younger children.

A Dancer

HER real start on her future career came while she was at this school. She won a gold cup at a dancing contest in a Kansas City ballroom.

Still she did not regard her general education as complete, and through friends she was enabled to go to college at Columbia, in Missouri. Here again she earned her tuition and board.

After that she was an employee at a department store until she could find an opening on the stage. When that came, she changed her name to Lucille Le Seuer, her mother's maiden name.

Then one day in Chicago she was noticed by the theatrical producer, J. J. Shubert, who took her to New York, and in no time she had attracted the attention of a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer executive.

She was given a screen test and, as a result, she was bidden to Hollywood. The rest is screen history. Changing her name once more to what was chosen for her by a public contest in a magazine, Joan Crawford has long since won a place among the dozen best-known players in Hollywood.

Her marriage to Douglas Fairbanks, Jun., in 1929, and its fairly recent dissolution, are also matters of common knowledge. Any rumors of a second marriage for Miss Crawford have yet to be established.

PRIVATE VIEWS

By BEATRICE TILDESLEY

OUR FILM GRADING SYSTEM
★★★ Three stars— excellent.
★★ Two stars— good films.
★ One star— average films.
No stars ..... no good.

★ GRANDAD RUDD

Bert Bailey, Elaine Hamill, George Lloyd. (Cinesound.)

IT is fitting that the part played by Bert Bailey should give the title to this film, for his rustic patriarch, grown somewhat older and more outspoken, is by far the most dominating character, and is rarely off the screen. Grandad has become more prosperous than when we saw him last, and has reached the dignified position of being received as an honored visitor at the local school. But that does not prevent him from hobnobbing with a crony at the hotel and coming back home in a condition that breaks up a Band of Hope committee. Neither does he see any reason for raising the wages of the members of his family who work for him. But he has apparently allowed his granddaughter (Elaine Hamill) to be brought up in a superior fashion.

The same kind of broad comedy pervades this piece as "On Our Selection." There is a similar bucolic courtship between a half-witted son (George Lloyd) and a local lass (Mollie Raynor), the daughter of the principal Band of Hope enthusiast. Instead of the bull which breaks out of the paddock there is here a runaway tractor. Some of the jokes one sees coming rather a long while beforehand, and the photography, missing as it does the beautiful valley scenes of the earlier film, is not so good.—State; com. Feb. 22.

★ TWO HEARTS IN WALTZ TIME

Carl Brisson, Frances Day, Oscar Asche. (B.D.F.)

WE have wondered on occasion how musical comedies managed to get themselves assembled. But the operetta of which we see rehearsals here, and later some scenes being performed before the first night audience, must hold the record for last minute vicissitudes and haphazard preparation. That Oscar Asche, as impresario, could bring himself to touch food at all during the days preceding the opening constitutes a triumph of mind over matter, however succulent that might be. Still, the operetta, as we see it, is a smooth enough variation on the "Princess Ida" theme. We give it up.

The setting of the film is once more Vienna. Carl Brisson, as the feted musical composer, who replaces the leading man at the eleventh hour, sings and makes love with all his practised charm. The scene where the leading lady, who has been repulsing his advances, lures him to compose the missing waltz, is prettily done. Frances Day, who has the face of a youthful Faun, finds restricted scope here for her impish talent, but acts with spirit. The Continental touch in the direction accounts for a slower tempo than in Hollywood musical films, and also for the absence of the clang and hard sparkle frequently noticeable in those productions.—Mayfair, rom. Feb. 20.

★ LOTTERY LOVER

Lew Ayres, Pat Paterson. (Fox).

CONTINENTAL influence is evident in this film, which has been directed by William Thiele rather in the manner of Ernst Lubitsch. This is all to the good. Stridencies have been toned down, and the piece moves lightly, but with a gay swing, incorporating some catchy little tunes. It is a nonsensical affair, describing how Lew Ayres, as the only serious-minded cadet among the company of the U.S. training ship Alaska, who are given shore leave in Paris when they reach French waters, is jockeyed into being their representative in an affair of gallantry with the reigning queen of the Folies Parisiennes (Peggy Fears), while the rest of the lively lads look on enviously at his progress.

Alan Dinehart, as an American guide to Parisian night life, directs operations, and bright-faced Pat Paterson is brought from the theatre chorus for the young man to practise on, with the usual results in love-making for the pair of them. Ayres shows an amiable gaucherie in his approaches to the goddess, and we liked Dinehart's cross between a confidence man and a benevolent guardian of youth. An entertaining scene of massed duelling in the Bois that turns into a sword dance makes the climax of the picture.—Capitol; com. Feb. 22.

★ OVER THE GARDEN WALL

Bobby Howes, Marian Marsh (B.I.P.).

A TYPICALLY English light comedy, inclining to farce. There is not the high explosive velocity we are accustomed to find in the Hollywood parallel. But it flows in gentle ripples of amusement, and some of the lines have an agreeable freshness. The house garnished with antimacassars and wax fruit, is in nice contrast with the modernism favored next door, and so are the mistresses of the two establishments, who dislike one another on sight and endeavor without success to keep apart their respective visitors, a niece (Marian Marsh) and a nephew (Bobby Howes).

Miss Marsh looks very pretty, but the American vowel sounds do not suit her circumstances. Bobby Howes can do on his head this kind of young lad-about-town, and Bertha Belmore is exactly fitted into the part of the old-fashioned aunt. Some minor characters also, such as the hotel porter and the easily out-witted constable, are neatly played.—Lyceum; com. Feb. 2.

★ ST. LOUIS KID

James Cagney, Patricia Ellis. (Warner Bros.)

WE had grown used to James Cagney as a pugnacious middleweight, swift in action and strident in repartee. Here he shows all his old-time readiness to get his blow in first, but his voice is comparatively dulcet. A pleasant surprise. The film is concerned largely with the trucking of milk by road in between country towns of the U.S.A., an exciting business apparently when a racket tries to hold the farmers to ransom. Cagney, as a truck-driver, is naturally well into the trouble in company with his friend (Allen Jenkins). He has a private dispute also with a girl (Patricia Ellis), who runs a cafe along the route.

No puny letter-of-the-law considerations fetter the judgment of the Ostopolis Court, before which the friends are haled; and the local gaol is most hospitable. In fact, we wondered why they should be so anxious to leave this veritable home from home. In various combats with the opposite side Cagney uses his head with literally stunning result. The ninepin effect of this onslaught is amusing. What a brain, or rather, what a cranium!—Capitol; com. Feb. 23.

★ MR. CINDERS

Clifford Mollison, Zelma O'Neal (B.I.P.)

THERE is a good deal to be said for musical comedies without ballets. They have more time for humorous interludes. This version of a stage success is a lighthearted film in which Clifford Mollison is the poor relation of an English county family. His Princess-Charming - cum - Fairy Godmother (Zelma O'Neal) is the daughter of an American millionaire just arrived to take a neighboring place. Miss O'Neal's principal qualifications for the part are a lively sense of fun, plus good humor. Her singing is toneless. But it is the words rather than the music that count throughout the piece. Her duet in the kitchen with Mollison is neatly done. The hopeful sons of the house also show a pretty gift as duettists.

Some of the old jokes are best after all. We defy anyone not to be amused at the village dramatic society essaying to perform "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in the grounds of the Hall. And Mollison panoplied in a suit of plate armor for the fancy dress dance is a sight for sore eyes. A Scotch postmistress in the heart of rural England seems peculiar, and even more curious is a policeman who sometimes imagines he is Irish. But we are really in no mood for carping.—State; com. Jan. 25.

DANGEROUS CORNER

Virginia Bruce, Conrad Nagel. (R.K.O.)

WHY anyone should have thought that this material could be converted into a film passes comprehension. J. B. Priestley's play, which seems to derive equally from Henry James and Tchekoff, is not very satisfactory, anyhow. None of the characters or their involved, clandestine love affairs excite the slightest sympathy. But on the stage this conversation piece achieves a certain sinister brilliance as the hidden truth about the superficially correct and united family is gradually brought out.

The idea that the actions of many people and their relations to one another are governed by chance is well founded. The devastating might-have-been is ingeniously posed before the actual denouement. But whether the radio misfire has in itself any significance is obscure. And Conrad Nagel's relentless catechism and the unwilling replies of the others, with the camera picking up each speaker in turn, has too much the effect of repetition. The whole thing impresses one as misplaced effort on the part of capable performers.—Capitol; com. Feb. 15.

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Intimate Jottings

Did You Know That—

Duc Santo Mauro, of Spain, former Lieutenant-Commander in Spanish Navy, is making Hotel Australia Sydney headquarters?

Vanished Appetites

MANY cooks registered rage at neglected Sunday dinners . . . Reason for this, extensive assortment of savories at the Gillie Krygers' morning cocktail party . . . Ferrante family, so soon to depart these shores, honored guests . . . All expressed wish to return to Sydney . . . Virginia, debutante daughter, feels more than half Australian after many years here . . . Toni Ferrante preceded family and will be waiting on Italian soil with glad hand.

As You Were!

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION executive pondered Conference matters at Forum Club all last week . . . Mrs. J. W. C. Beveridge only member missing . . . Indisposition cause of absence . . . Mrs. Sawyer O.B.E. in chair . . . Time for nominations for State President nearly at end . . . No new names so far. Resolutions decided upon for April Conference.

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Among the Palm Beach surfers last week was Honor Kater, who is staying with the Ken Ryries.

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Dancing at Romanos

VERY beautiful was ivory taffeta frock, embroidered with gold roses, worn by Joyce Abrahams at Romano's on Saturday night . . . Matching coat was of black taffeta with gold rose motif still in evidence . . . Long trail of pink roses from shoulder gave artistic contrast . . . Joyce made one of first appearances with fiance Raymond Tobias . . . Raymond has just burnt lots of midnight oil studying for law exams.

News from Wellington

WELLINGTON, families well represented at Manly . . . Mr. and Mrs. Geoff Kiss have brought their two sons for first glimpse of sea . . . Their in-laws, the Norman Smiths from Glenwood, Wellington, are guests . . . Denis Barton couple from Nanima also disporting themselves at Manly for third year in succession. At Jervis Bay are Mr. and Mrs. T. Maurice and three small children . . . Also hail from Wellington.

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Hear that Doreen Hordern's marriage to Oscar Peall will take place in England. Sir Samuel and Lady Hordern not contemplating trip for wedding.

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Watched Frank Work!

MUSICIANS and artists still abound at Deewhy . . . Last week-end saw Frank Hutchens abroad in rural garden making young bush fires of dead branches . . . Party of friends stood clear of smoke to watch a man working. Ramsay Pennicuick, also of Conservatorium staff, acts host at nearby bungalow . . . Picnic meals eaten on verandah among romantic scenery . . . Flat rocks and gum trees in foreground frame moonlit sea and coastline.

Indian Army Film

VERY smart was Prince Edward Theatre audience on Saturday for first night of "Lives of a Bengal Lancer" . . . Full evening dress the vogue and mother-of-pearl nails much in evidence with the younger generation . . . All white chosen by Kathleen Burke for filmy dance frock . . . Her smart jodhpurs correctly tailored and set off with felt teral . . . Medici collar on Mrs. John Fairfax's frock most interesting . . . Rouleau of white camellias at neckline, which came high in front.

Thrilling Army Romance

MOST thrilling engagement just announced... Gwen Fulton Rofe, member of well-known legal family, now wearing ring given by Captain Bruce Watchorn, son of Colonel and Mrs. Watchorn, of Apple Isle... Bruce stationed with Army in Brisbane and recently escorted Prince Henry on morning gallops... Marriage to take place this year... Prospective bride already well known and most popular in Queensland.

Forward, Playwrights!

NOW is time for playwrights to produce their offerings . . . Beryl Bryant arranging one-act play tournament . . . Plays must be original Australian productions . . . Best of entries will all get hearing at Bryant's Playhouse . . . Tournament commences in July and last words must be written before May 23.

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Nancy Sawyer, a debutante of recent months, was among the dancers at the Hotel Australia last Thursday. She was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Max Hinder.

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Alice Bids Farewell

MANY ambitions relating to footlights will be packed in Alice Bolger's wardrobe trunk when en route for England . . . Before leaving she will take leading role in "Meet the Wife" in gala farewell performance . . . Alice's flair for comedy has fine scope in this play . . . Mayor and Mayoress of Mosman will lend helping hands.

Honeymoon in India

MR. AND MRS. WILFRED O'BRIEN have returned from honeymoon in India . . . Such romantic places as Udaipur and Agra visited . . . Also penetrated Khyber Pass to Afghanistan . . . Couple intend spending some weeks in Sydney en route to station home, Goodiman. Before marriage Mrs. O'Brien was Grace Morris of Mudgee.

Mombasa Memories

MRS. PHILIP YEATES of Sydney reports finding East Coast of Africa very interesting . . . Mombasa, small but pretty, with masses of frangipanni and hibiscus in bloom . . . Old Arab town of Zanzibar alluring . . . Whole town smells of cloves . . . Streets too narrow for anything but rickshaws . . . Old floating dock, partly sunk by Germans, still showing at Dar-es-Salaam.

Goulburn Visitors

GOULBURN treated like Sydney suburb by Mr. and Mrs. Clive Milson of Cardross . . . They frequently motor down for special doings taking only three hours for journey . . . Races have great fascination for popular young couple, and Randwick meetings never missed . . . Before recent marriage Mrs. Milson was Betty Barrett of Young and one of district's brightest belles.

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After seeing wool sold, Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Maddrell left for Braidwood on visit to Mrs. Maddrell, senr.

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Quaint Chinese Play

MRS. JAMES SHUTE and niece, Val Daniel, loving stay in London . . . Do not contemplate return until next year . . . Have seen lots of theatres including Chinese play acted in Chinese manner . . . Quaintly named "Lady Precious Stream." Equestrian scene greatly hampered by lack of horses . . . Actors did the galloping and used imaginary whips . . . Travellers recently entertained by Lance Fairfax and charming wife in lovely flat at St. John's Wood.

THE MAGIC HOUR! Mrs. Max Hinder photographed while reading fairy stories to her two little daughters, April and Jennifer, on the verandah of their home in Fairfax Road, Bellevue Hill.

—Women's Weekly Photo.

Pakeha's Only Passenger

MRS. K. LOVELL, only lady and only passenger on board Paheka, a Shaw-Savill boat, all way from London . . . Not lonely, as brother is doctor on board . . . While ship loads cargo Mrs. Lovell thoroughly enjoying visit to Sydney . . . Made emphatic her views on our kindly hospitality and many pretty girls about . . . On way out six weeks without touching land . . . Just glimpsed lighthouse at Teneriffe.

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Quite a clothes feast at St. James... Joan Crawford's frocking in "Chained" simply superlative. Runs whole gamut of mode... Adrian, famous designer, was responsible... Myrna Loy in "Stamboul Quest" sartorially holds her own.

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Clever Art Students

TRULY amazing is the original exhibition of design and crafts, painting, and commercial illustration at Blaxland Galleries . . . Students from East Sydney Technical responsible for entries . . . Helena Boden most successful in depicting times of day . . . Early morning represented by equestrienne on Romanesque horse and midday shows lady in throes of having hair "permed."

Charming Curlylocks

SEEN admiring Empress Eugenie hair-dress as depicted by Claudette Colbert at Plaza Theatre on Friday night was Helen Thompson . . . Her naturally curly thatch not unlike film star's . . . Helen has enjoyed surfing from one end of coast to another . . . Has attended lots of house parties . . . Excellent surf exponent and does not need surfboard for big "shoots" . . . Once more in domestic circle in North Shore home.

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Furs and winter woollies will figure largely in Cherie Haley's trousseau. Her marriage to Murray Crossing will take place in midwinter.

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All Aboard Otranto

SIR MACPHERSON Robertson, of Centenary and other fame, leaving for England . . . Lady Robertson will accompany him . . . Business trip, but Jubilee celebrations to be on itinerary . . . Also on board Otranto Robert Ainsworth, conductor of Royal Grand Opera Company, and husband of Muriel Brunskill, contralto . . . Suzanne White will be joined at Adelaide by Stogdale family for pleasure trip.

Famous Surgeon Leaves

AUSTRALIA'S most famous surgeon, Sir Alexander MacCormick, is once more leaving our shores after short visit . . . His home now in Channel Islands . . . Sir Alexander and Lady MacCormick gave a farewell cocktail party during week-end . . . Hostess looked charming . . . Her youngest daughter, the beautiful Morna, now married and living in England bears striking resemblance to her mother . . . The travellers leave by Orontes.

Did You Notice That—

Mrs. Warwick Fairfax was caught in a severe rainstorm in town clad in summery raiment of pale blue with white accessories?

Jane Anne

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Steelo

This fine steel wool, properly made and graded for aluminium, restores the natural sheen and colour of the metal. It does it quickly, too, with less rubbing than ever.

RINGS *For* SALE

Continued from Page 13

"THAT'S just it. We've tried three and they're all full up with work, and can't come till tomorrow. And—and you see this evening my—my mother-in-law is coming to supper."

"Oh!"

"Yes," there were tears in the hazel eyes now—"and—and she's always thought me dreadfully untidy and careless and she—she'll make no end of fuss about the ring being lost, and—and I do so want the evening to go off well. And it's no use my getting a cheap one, because she's the sort of person who would spot it immediately, and that would only make it worse. So I thought if I could just borrow one——"

"Well, madam, I daresay I could arrange it for you, but you will let us have a deposit, of course?"

The little bride flushed up to the roots of her hair.

"That's just it," she said unhappily, "I—you see, it's not pay day till tomorrow, and I—I've only got five shillings left. But I thought perhaps if I left my name and address—it's Mrs. Phillips, 20, Green Mansions, just over the way, you know——"

Edie giggled again, but Ann frowned at her.

"Excuse me a moment, madam," she said, "and I'll just see——"

She went into the back office, where Mr. Kidd, the oily little manager, was sitting. Briefly she explained matters to him, and he raised his hands and eyebrows to high heaven.

"You have been with me two—three years, Miss Richards," he exclaimed, "and you ask me if you can lend rings without deposit. Nothing doing, my dear!"

"But, Mr. Kidd," pleaded Ann, "she's such a sweet little girl, and she seems absolutely honest——"

"My dear, our prisons are full of 'sweet little girls' who seem absolutely honest—till they're found out. Go and get rid of her quickly, before I send for the police."

Ann went back.

"I'm sorry, madam," she said apologetically, "but I am afraid we cannot lend you a ring without a deposit."

"Oh, dear!" Little Mrs. Phillips looked as though she was going to cry. "Can't you possibly, now you know all about it?"

"I'm awfully sorry, madam, but I have to do as I'm told, you know."

"Oh, of course, it's not your fault—I thank you—good evening." The little wife turned and fairly ran out of the shop.

Edie spluttered with laughter.

"Well, that's a new dodge on me," she declared.

Ann turned on her fiercely.

"I'm sure it's not a dodge," she declared. "I'm positive she was speaking the truth, poor kid, just married and all. I wish—why, of course, why didn't I think of it before. Watch the shop, Edie, a moment, I'll be right back."

She dashed out of the shop, leaving the astonished Edie gazing after her.

"Batty!" she exclaimed, and then put on her professional smile as a young man in spats came in to choose a manicure set for his fiancee.

Meantime, Ann was rushing down the street after little Mrs. Phillips. She caught her up at the end of the road.

"Oh, Mrs. Phillips!" she cried. "Just one moment!"

The girl turned. Her face was the picture of despondency, but when she saw Ann her eyes lit up.

"Oh, you!" she cried. "Will—will they let me have one after all?"

"No, but I can."

"You! But how——"

"Yes, I've got one at home—we've both got small hands, I'm sure it would fit. Listen, we close in half an hour, and I could bring it round to your address at seven. Would that do?"

"Of course! I say, how simply marvellous of you!"

Please turn to Page 44

Man

Find a man in poverty,
Or in ways where riches be;
Find a man in sin and lust
Or esteemed with honored trust;
Clownish, or world-wise;
Find him blessed with sunny years,
Or with Sorrow's blasting tears;
Find a man with wit and power,
Find him broken, dull and sour,
Singing or with sighs;
Find him lusty, strong and keen,
Broken down and wearing lean;
Striving for a distant goal,
Drifting, an uncompassed soul,
In Heaven or Hell's despair;
Made perchance of meaner clay,
Find a man where'er you may—
A woman put him there.

—Sincerity.

Do You Know—

THAT the violet is the emblem of faithfulness. Back in the days when Napoleon was banished to the Island of Elba, his followers said that he would return when the violets bloomed again and they wore rings and watch-ribbons of violet as a secret symbol of recognition to each other.

When a MAN tells you:

that he is thankful to Calvert's Tooth Powder for a life-time free from dental trouble and for white teeth in his old age—

Well, don't you think it is worth trying for *your* teeth!

AUSTRALIA'S LOVELY OPALS. 10/6 EACH—send this cutting and 10/6 for opal and we will mount in a dainty Antique Silver Ring. Free of Charge. E. SMITH, "The Opal Mine," 113A PITT ST., SYDNEY.

Special Offer

Thousands of *Amazing* *Free Gifts!*

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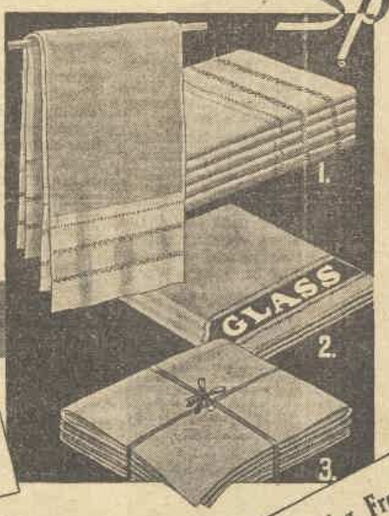

POPULAR FREE GIFTS FOR MOTHER.
1. Thousands of brightly coloured useful gift towels, good quality. Size 40 inches x 20 inches.
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3. Good Quality Pillow Slips for the housewife. 30 inches x 20 inches.

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Good quality Fountain Pens for Boys and Girls.

Pocket Knives
Strong Pocket Knives for Boys.

HANDKERCHIEFS
Nice boxes of Pure Irish Lawn Hankies for Girls. So useful!

STATIONERY
Boxes of lovely Stationery. Latest style, shape and colour. Most attractively boxed.

To further popularise the use of the four excellent products illustrated in this advertisement the manufacturers offer you your choice of any free gift illustrated here in exchange for the following coupons:

4 coupons from Fountain Self Raising Flour, 4 lb. size (or 8 coupons from 2 lb. packets)
6 coupons from Fountain Pure Fruit Jellies
2 coupons from Basket Brand Mixed Dried Fruits
2 coupons from Breakfast D-Light

14 only assorted coupons required

NOTE: You must have the correct number from each product.

When you have collected your assorted coupons as shown above, bring them to the Gift Showroom of W. C. Douglass Ltd., Foveaux Street, Sydney (opposite Sydney Railway Station), and select your free gift before the 1st of May next, or call personally at our warehouse, 41 Scott Street, Newcastle.

If you live in the country, write to Miss Ruth Boyle, Box 218D, G.P.O., Sydney, and she will personally send on your free gift, provided you enclose two stamps for postage. Write your name and address clearly on the outside of your coupon parcel.

All Douglass Pure Food Products are sold on the guarantee by your grocer—"Satisfaction or your purchase money refunded." The most liberal coupon offer we have ever made'

This Special Offer Definitely Closes 1st MAY, 1935

Start Saving Coupons To-day!

IMPORTANT.—You must save **14 assorted coupons as** shown above. Every product here is fully guaranteed by **W. C. DOUGLASS LTD., Foveaux Street, Sydney.** Country clients please enclose 2 stamps to cover postage.

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THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY
HOMEMAKER

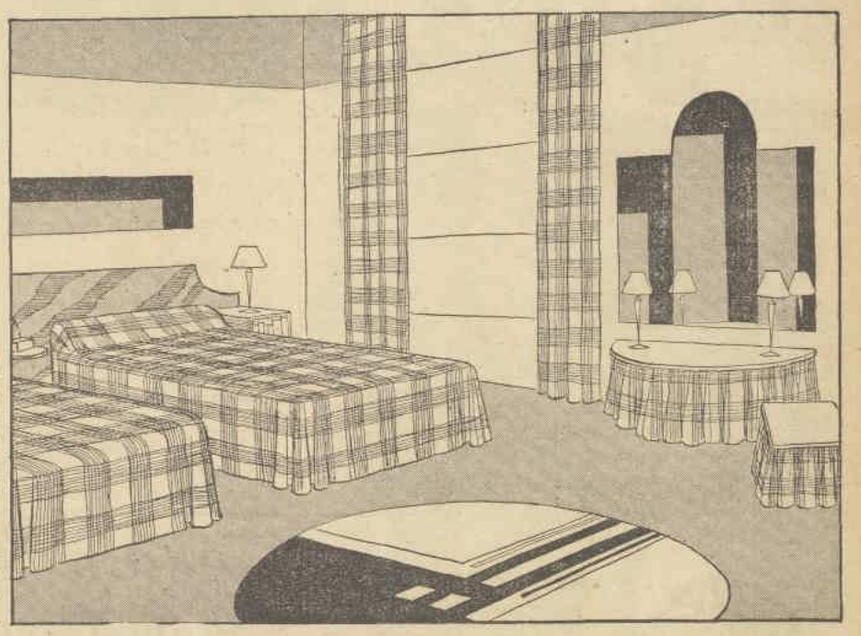
February 23, 1935. A special section devoted to the interests of home-lovers. 29

DRESSING TABLES THAT WHISPER SO CHARMINGLY OF YESTERYEAR

.... Yet incorporate in their voluminous folds the smartness of our modern day.

By OUR HOME DECORATOR

WHAT an interesting age we live in—though, I suppose, many would not agree... But think! We can delve into the past, revive all those charming ideas and customs that especially appeal to us, and combine them with the wonders of this age in which we walk. We are a very clever people, but nevertheless we hark back to bygone days. We cannot help it... And so to dressing-tables.



FRILLS AND FLOUNCES for the dressing-table matching curtains and twin bed coverlets—smartly up to date with the modern materials used. With very little effort, small expense, and a few yards of material anyone can create one of these charming dressing-tables for the bedroom.

THERE are several ways of making these delightfully feminine affairs as I have told you several times, previously—although it is twelve months since I dwelt at any length on the absorbing subject.

Since that time they are enjoying a wider popularity. America was the first to hail their revival and, more recently in England, Fashion set her seal of favor upon them.

In my previous articles I told you how you could utilise a kitchen table—how it could become so exquisitely lovely as to transform, literally, a bedroom. Yet the secret is such a simple one—paint and varnish, or lacquer, crisp, filmy, or lustrous fabric, and your own capable fingers.

Material Used

FLOWERED linen, cretonne, china silk, shantung, gingham, chintz, taffeta, dotted muslin, lace (with silken foundation), flowered chiffon, organdie, and even quilted fabrics may be used. From this list I would like to cut out cretonne unless it is a particularly smart patterned one. And don't countenance satin.

I have seen these dressing tables flounced in all these materials, and I consider the latter two lack that something which, for a more explanatory word, we will call "charm."

The ordinary small kitchen table may be used in its existing form and treated similarly to that illustrated here, or cut kidney shape or with an oval front.

Circular Charm

IN this latter case, a central leg would be necessary in order to give adequate support to the curved edge.

Any woman handy with the tools could accomplish this, friend husband might do it for you, or the local carpenter as a last resort could be prevailed upon to make the change at little cost.

The next step is to paint or lacquer the table to harmonise with your color scheme and the material to be used.

Allow plenty of fullness in the frill (or petticoat) which is divided into two separate flounces. This allows you to utilise the space beneath. You can make a general calculation as to the amount of material required by measuring around the curved or kidney-shaped front (and sides if a square table is used), and adding as much again to allow for the fullness of the flounce.

This is all right providing the width of the material coincides with the height of the table. This obviates the necessity of a hem and saves time and labor.

A PELMET is an added attraction or some form of ruching or decoration is needed. Ribbon could be used, caught here and there with a bow or decorative flower.

Taffeta edged with lace, or deep flounces of lace (both are so amazingly cheap just now) would be exquisite.

Flowered chiffon flounces can be caught with ribbon bows, the ribbon matching the deepest tone of the pattern.

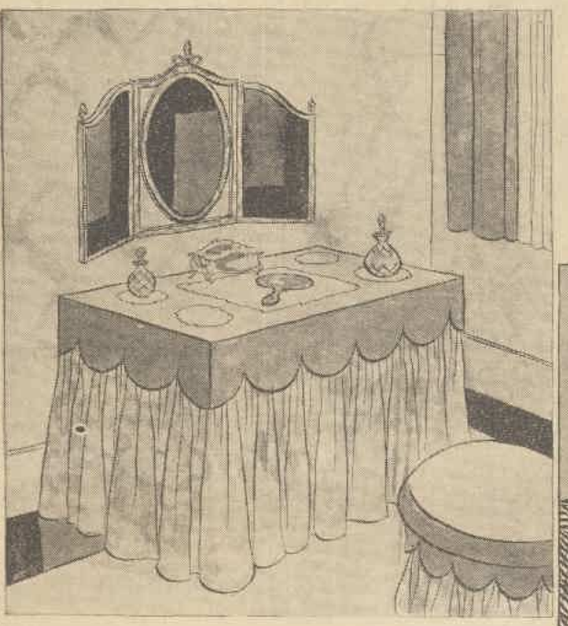
For Sweet Sixteen

DOTTED swiss muslin in delicate pastel shades is simply divine for the young girl's room. She can have cross-over curtains, and frilled and beruffled flounces to her dressing table, the curtains caught back with ribbon, and the flounces to the dressing table held in place with the same colored ribbon.

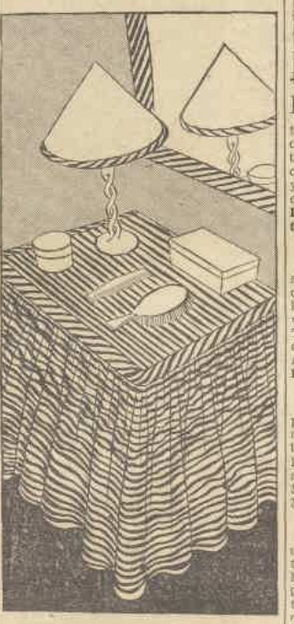
Organdie, banded a contrasting or deeper harmonising shade, would be an enchanting alternative for sweet sixteen's room.

A sheet .. plate glass covering the lacquered top or the fabric covered top is ideal, but this is more expensive.

The mirror can be hung from the picture rail above the dressing table, or if you possess an old-fashioned mirror, just lacquer it to tone with the top of the table which has, of course, been lacquered in a shade in keeping with the main color scheme of the room.—E.E.G.



At Left: FLOWERED CHINTZ decorates this dressing-table, which was created from an ordinary small white deal kitchen table. A pelmet of a plain material, harmonising with the deepest color of the design, gives a tailored finish to this delightful affair.



STRIPED taffeta covers and flounces this miniature dressing-table. Thick white cord gives a smart finish. The mirror above the table is framed with the same material, likewise the art vellum lampshade

Clever IDEAS

GOOD NEWS!

Clever ideas are worth money—send us yours! A first prize of 10/- is awarded each week for the best idea submitted. For every other item published, 2/6 is paid. No nom-de-plumes accepted.

IF you have a dress with colored buttons, and you want to change them to match accessories, sew a press stud on, half to the dress, the other half to the button. Do this with several sets of buttons. You may use this idea if you wear buttons that will not wash. If carefully done, it is a very neat job.—**First Prize of 10/- to Mrs. T. Page, Milton, 78 Edgeware Rd., Enmore, N.S.W.**

IF A GLASS stopper in a bottle is stuck fast, place bottle up to neck in cold water, then wring piece of towel in boiling water. Place round stopper; it will loosen after once, or twice doing. Then put a little vaseline round inside of the bottle neck to prevent sticking again.—**Miss M. Oram, Campbell St., Bowen Hills, Brisbane.**

IF JELLIES are wanted in a hurry pour on to the jelly half the necessary amount of water boiling. Stir well, then add the other half of the water, icy cold, and stir well. The jelly will set in less than half the usual time.—**Mrs. A. Hayes, 220 Coventry St., South Melbourne, Vic.**

HERE'S A novel way to hang a long dress to prevent the bottom from getting crushed. Hang the bodice on one hanger, and fold the skirt neatly and place over another hanger with hook taken out and a piece of ribbon put on each end and tying in the middle. Then hang up together.—**Mrs. L. Earnshaw, 23 David St., Croydon, N.S.W.**

IF YOU are running short of vinegar put the beetroot through the mincer instead of slicing it. Very little vinegar will then be required.—**Frances Knight, c/o 15 Duke St., Yatala, S.A.**

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1,000 WINTER COATS at SNOWS

Chic 1935 styles, quality fabrics, superior furs, generous cut, excellent values!

This year, more than ever, Snows unquestioned leadership in coat values is brought home to wise shoppers by these typical advance styles, which for economy, quality and sheer beauty must stand unchallenged.

A Coat from Snows is your Best Winter Investment!

MAKE AN EARLY SELECTION, AND LAY-BY!

1—FINE FLECK DIAGONAL makes this luxurious coat. Topped with magnificent American Opossum, and fully lined. Black, Navy, Leaf Brown. SSW to OS. SUPER VALUE AT **99/11**

Windswept!

2. A smartly serviceable coat, fully lined, and featuring FRAME collar of shorn lamb. Black, Navy, Brown, Fawn, Barktan. SSW to OS. SUPER VALUE **49/11**

Smart!

3. Fancy coating, with new sleeve treatment and collar of American Opossum. Fully lined. Black, Navy, Leaf-brown, Nigger. SW to OS. SUPER VALUE **79/11**

Windswept!

4. Quality fabric combined with silky Long Hair Lamb. Twill lined. Black, Navy, Leaf-brown, Cruise, Barktan, Fawn. SSW to OS. SUPER VALUE **69/11**

Others priced at 59/11 and 59/11! Select early and lay-by! Everybody's doing it!

Sydney Snow Ltd.
PITT & LIVERPOOL STREETS

AUTUMN FASHIONS

. . . *Bright with Surprises!*

This season's dresses are unexpected and intriguing—deliberately surprising... Provoking slits... Unusual color schemes... Chic combinations. And of these Farmer's are showing delightful models at their fashion preview.

EVENING frocks are versatile and show either the silhouette line with tunic and slit skirt, or are bouffant, falling from a moulded waist line.

A special feature this season is the "double-duty" frock—a very decollete frock, frequently in satin, with an accompanying tunic or shirt blouse, which can be slipped off for formal occasions. A delightful ensemble of this type is in black satin with a prim high-necked satin blouse in white.

Net is used in a great many ways, often combined with heavier materials. A particularly lovely model shown was of finely-pleated black net with a very full skirt worn over a gold lame foundation, which shimmered through the net as the mannequin moved.

One of the most interesting fashions shown was in black slipper satin, the back of the frock being shot in black, red and gold. The bouffant skirt was slit at the side front, and the dress finished at the waist with flowers of shot gold and red. The strapless Mainbocher boned bodice, which is a very new feature, was finished with a softly-pleated upstanding frill.

New color combinations are tulip noir and turquoise, peacock and brown, and red and blue.

Plenty of rhinestone beading, metal, and pearl ornaments, and in materials, uncrushable velvets, sometimes cellophane run, metal run cloque weaves, taffetas and moires make their fascinating bow to general favor.

WHOOPEE!

A Cowboy Talks on Dress . . .

TWO Cherokee Indians, two Cossacks, and a tall cowboy invaded Farmer's Business Girls' Luncheon last week, and created quite a furore. They were part of the "International Stampede," now visiting Sydney, and the cowboy was Mr. McColl, their leader.

Both Cossacks and Indians were very willing to entertain. The Indians sang several plaintive Indian songs, and gave a thrilling war dance. The Cossacks sang Russian songs.

And the big surprise of the day was when the cowboy, blue-shirted, leather-jacketed, and spurred, stood up and gave a very serious and thoughtful discussion on the importance of dress to a woman.

Mr. McColl said he was an Australian, and had travelled over most of the cities of the world and lived in Hollywood, Mecca of smartness, but, in his opinion, there were no smarter girls anywhere than in Sydney.

He then continued that it should be the aim of every young lady in her dress to have as many changes as possible. Such changes bring forth, each one a different personality. Moreover, dress is most important in all walks of life. It is the thing that makes people take notice.

DON'T . . . FORGET

The Poster Exhibition at Blaxland Galleries from March 6 to 13, arranged by Miss Guy.

☆ ☆ ☆

The gala farewell performance of "Meet the Wife," given to Alice Bolger prior to her departure for England, at St. James' Hall, Phillip St., on March 4.

☆ ☆ ☆

The beautiful gardens of Bonnie Brae, Middope, and Ravenscraig, in Burns Rd., Wahroonga, will be open for inspection on February 23 and 24, in aid of the funds of the Free Kindergarten of N.S.W.

☆ ☆ ☆

The first annual ball of the Manly and Warringah Ambulance, to be held at Hotel Manly, March 7, at 8.30 p.m. Reservations at Hotel Manly.

☆ ☆ ☆

The car drive in aid of St. Margaret's Hospital, to Lapstone Hill, February 23. Cars will leave 31 Macquarie Place at 2 p.m. For reservations ring BW2051.

☆ ☆ ☆

The Legacy Club Ball, Sydney Town Hall, on February 28, in the presence of Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven, V.C., Governor of N.S.W.

☆ ☆ ☆

The Victoria League will welcome Sir Charles Orr, a member of Central Executive and former Governor of the Bahamas at Reception at Hotel Australia, on March 4, at 4 p.m.

☆ ☆ ☆

The Arts, Crafts and Hobbies Exhibition, to be held March 29 and 30, under the auspices of the Bexley Congregational Church Youth Welfare Association.

☆ ☆ ☆

The matinee performances of Mrs. Ada A. Holman's one-act plays at David Jones' Auditorium, April 10, in aid of the New South Wales Institution for Deaf and Dumb and Blind Children. Sir Alexander and Lady Hore-Ruthven have extended their patronage.

Vim's SOAP-COATED grains
CLEAN FASTER
SMOOTHER
CLEANER
A LEVER PRODUCT

"I can't afford new frocks — but I'm **not** worried — no one will know my old ones. By the time NADCO and I have spent an hour or so with them they will be fashionable again. I wouldn't risk inferior dyes. You can't rely on anything but the best. NADCO colours (there are 30) are fast. NADCO cleans the fabric as it dyes. So easy to use, too. You try dyeing with NADCO. You'll be surprised how much money you'll save."

Obtainable from all Chemists & Stores.

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30 MODERN SHADES

HOME FAST DYES

INVISIBLE MENDING

Damaged Garments Re-woven. Torn, Burnt, Moth-eaten Suits, Costumes, Carpets, etc., INVISIBLY Re-woven.
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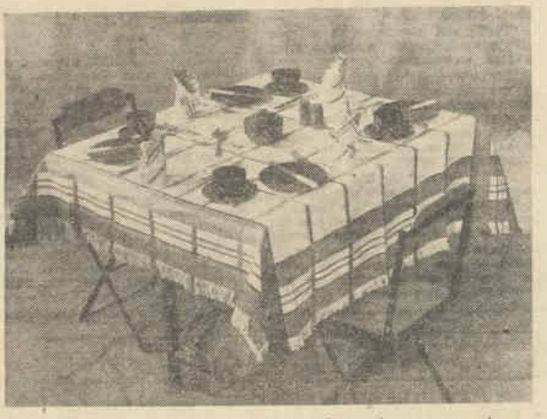
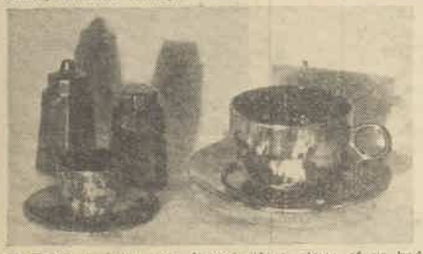
PICNICKING with "NALLY"

. . . Invests the Occasion — with Charm and Color

FOR those of us who spend the week-days filling our niche in the world of work, the week-end is a time for change and relaxation—that day and a half is so precious that we like to cram all the brightness and gaiety we can into it. . . I have often idly speculated on Sunday mornings, while packing my own picnic case (similar to the one you see illustrated) just how many other lunches are being packed to answer the call of the surf, the bush, and our shady river-banks.



PICNIC MEALS or garden meals are meant to be gay and bright and anything that can invest them with charm and color is worth its weight in gold. Bungalow cloths may be bought for so little these days and make just the right background for a service of gay Nally ware.



AT LEFT: Here you glimpse a darling egg-cup in the new Nally ware, which any little one would love to own. Salt and pepper shakers are so pretty on the breakfast table. Note the shape of the cup and saucer. A matching service would make a lovely gift—keep this in mind!

—Photos by courtesy of Grace Bros.

NOT so long ago, it was the custom in many households to bring out from the back of the cupboard all the chipped and cracked pieces of china for the picnic basket in the mistaken idea that anything was good enough for an outdoor meal. . . .

Some of us had recourse to paper plates, etc.—but how uninteresting! Certainly, they saved washing up, but were so anaemic-looking—so apt to "go in the middle" if the foods were moist . . . .

And then out of the blue as it were, came Nally ware . . . So light—such an advantage when the question of transport was raised. So easy to pack—even the cups are so made that they "nest" one in the other, and take up a surprisingly small amount of space. . . . So attractive, so durable. . . . And you can get anything and everything that is necessary to making the picnic meal the most attractive, loveliest meal of the week.

In fact, many pieces are becoming popular for indoor meals—and no wonder!

I am so enthusiastic about Nally ware that I paid a visit to the Nally factory this week, so that I could tell you a little about the production.

It was interesting to learn that the manufacture of Nally ware is an Australian industry, and is only nine years old, for it was in 1926 that the company first put up their shingle and proceeded to convert the colored powders imported from England into articles of such unique utility and charm. They have taken a long step in a short while. From the production of a few articles, which, although not prohibitive in price, were really rather expensive, they now turn out an almost unlimited range of articles at prices which place this lovely ware within the reach of all purses.

I was not long in this interesting factory before I realised that weeks of labor and painstaking care often go to the making of a particular die (or mould). The dies are case-hardened steel, and the Nally company makes all its own dies on the premises.

The raw material is imported in drums from England in a wide range of colors, and is put into a machine that compresses it into tablet form, some about the size of a shilling and some a bit larger. It is then ready for use.

THE dies are heated and the tablets put into the moulds—the necessary quantity is determined by weight—and in various colors according to the color-scheme desired. This is so arranged that although the color-scheme of a series is the same, the exact pattern may never be duplicated.

Please turn to Page 33

A NALLY picnic case, containing ½ dozen cups and saucers, ½ dozen plates, 1 large plate, 2 glass jars for sugar and tea with Nally tops. The fibre case for ease of carriage is strong, but light. Price 38/6 at Grace Bros.

"I'm glad that week-end's over!

Her house is simply depressing!"

"If she'd only brighten that dull, dingy furniture with Dynamel! It's so easy!"

It's easy, because Dynamel *spreads* more easily than any enamel you've ever known! That's why you'll get a perfect finish with Dynamel—even though you've never painted anything before! It dries in one hour—smooth, even, free from ridges or brush-marks—like the work of a professional painter!

Use Taubmans Dynamel on chairs, tables, shelves, cupboards, in kitchen and bathroom—on bedroom and living room furniture that's become shabby or dingy—wherever colour is needed! It's easy!

Stores and paint dealers everywhere sell Dynamel—in 30 attractive colours—in handy tins!

Tune in to Taubmans "Favorites Old and New"—2 GB, 6.20 p.m. Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs.—3 DB, 8.15 p.m. Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs.

TAUBMANS

DYNAMEL

THERE'S A TAUBMAN PAINT FOR EVERY POSSIBLE PURPOSE

when you cook by electricity!

● If you want bright, clean pots and pans. ● If you want a fresh, cool, clean kitchen. ● If you want more leisure and complete freedom from kitchen toil. ● If you want perfect cooking *always* at low cost. ● If you want to save money and avoid waste and spoiled food. ● If you want to be free to enjoy life.

YOU *MUST* COOK BY ELECTRICITY.

Any approved Electric Range may now be purchased from electrical retailers on the following EASY TERMS:

20% deposit. 2 years' terms.
Free installation (up to a cost of £6).
Users of Electric Ranges are supplied with ALL household electricity at a specially reduced rate.

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Make Going to Business a Pleasure

LIVE AT MANLY.

Travel to and from town in fast, comfortable, roomy, glassed-in Saloon Steamers. Enjoy twice daily the most delightful Harbor Trip in the World.

ONLY MANLY CAN OFFER YOU THIS

Manly's gigantic wonder pool, at night floodlit over and under the water, contains Slippery Dips, Diving Towers, Floating Funicons, Water Wheels, Spinning Floats, Rolling Logs, numerous Springboards, and a host of other aquatic novelties, and is

FREE TO THE PUBLIC DAY AND NIGHT

The Company's magnificent Dressing Pavilion, with its up-to-date Tea Rooms and Open-air Kiosk, is situated at the end of the Pool, and provides the acme of comfort and convenience for all. The Tea Rooms are also available for suppers, bridge, and birthday parties, dances, etc.

'PHONE YU2168 AND MAKE YOUR RESERVATION NOW!

WEEKLY TICKETS—7 DAYS' TRAVELLING (ALL DAY, ANY DAY, ANY TIME): GENT'S, 4/-; LADIES', 3/-.

SEASON TICKETS COST PER DAY: GENT'S, 4½d.; LADIES', 3¾d.; CHILD'S, 1½d.

DAILY FARE: ADULTS, 6d.; CHILDREN, 1d. (5 Years and Under, FREE).

THE PORT JACKSON AND MANLY STEAMSHIP COMPANY LIMITED.
No. 3 JETTY, CIRCULAR QUAY. TELEPHONES: BO231, BO183.

A REAL optimist is one who not only hopes for the best, but sees that he gets it.—Dr. Downey, Archbishop of Liverpool.

Sent in by M.T., Rockhampton, Q.

HOWEVER much knowledge is attained, there is always plenty of room for faith.—Sir Oliver Lodge.

Sent in by T.M.H., Port Pirie, S.A.

THE worst of having a romance is that it leaves you so unromantic.—Oscar Wilde.

Sent in by A.J., Ballarat, Vic

ASTHMA SUFFERING ENDED

TO prove this, a German specialist will supply preliminary treatment free and without obligation to every sufferer who sends a 3d. stamp for return postage to O. A. HORAN, 230 Turner House, Jamieson St., Sydney.***

WANTED TO PURCHASE

OLD GOLD, Dental Gold, etc. E. E. Smith, 113a Pitt Street (near Hunter Street).***

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Mr. Valentine's DAY

Continued from Page 7

PHOEBE WREN cast a look at Sally Bett, and they both beat a hasty retreat for the playhouse with Alice after them.

They arrived first and locked the door.

"Open that door," demanded Alice, banging loudly.

They didn't even answer.

"All right for you. You just wait until mother gets home. You just wait."

Alice stalked off in a large huff.

They scarcely breathed. The dog wedged himself between them as close as he could get. Finally they saw Alice come out of the house and go out.

They sighed deeply and emerged. Their mothers were at a party, and Alice was going to one. They had a clear afternoon ahead, and furthermore, Sally Bett was invited to Phoebe Wren's for lunch.

First they went into the kitchen and showed the dolls to the Wren cook, who was impressed and promised to bring their lunch out to the playhouse on a tray.

It was a meal to be remembered. They cleared the table and set the dolls on it, and ate in their laps. They gave the pie to the dog, who didn't seem to mind that they had forgotten the sugar.

After that they put on their skates and took the dolls for a walk.

When they reached Phoebe Wren's house again they ran up on the grass with their skates on—the gardener being nowhere in sight. From round the house they heard Alice's voice, engaged in heated comment.

"And I know they cost two pounds if they cost a penny, and you can't tell me they haven't been up to something." Alice was broadcasting loudly.

"But where did they get them?" demanded Mrs. Wren.

"That's just it—where? I tell you they're spoilt, and as for Phoebe Wren, I think you should——"

Phoebe Wren didn't wait to see what it was her mother should do to her. She slipped out of the skates as quietly as a mouse, and, followed by her best friend, departed in great haste for what had once been called the alley, and was now known as the back drive.

They disappeared like two blue streaks. It had been a full day, and they were very tired. When they were out of sight they sat down on the Burtons' fence and considered things.

"There is no use going over to my house because your mother has probably told my mother by this time, and when we got there——"

Sally Bett left the rest to their imagination.

THEY sat very still, waiting for what they knew would come. It was chilly now, and their coats weren't warm enough. They sat and they shivered, and finally they heard Mrs. Wren calling, "Phoebe-e-e-e-e."

They let her call, and finally they heard Mrs. Cooper calling, "Sally-y-y-y-y-y."

They let her call, too, and soon a sports car came up the drive and stopped, and Mrs. Burton climbed out.

"Hello, children," said Mrs. Burton.

"We brought our new dolls over to show you," said Phoebe Wren.

"They're lovely," said Mrs. Burton, "they're perfectly sweet."

DOING HER star turn for Mr. Spooner. This girl conforms to the latest regulations with this modest tailored costume. The "Speedo" model shown is in all white with green stars.

Two calls rent the air.

"Isn't that your mother calling?" asked Mrs. Burton.

"Mine?" asked Phoebe Wren, very much surprised, and listened intently.

"Yes, don't you hear her?"

"Oh—oh, yes."

"And there is yours, too, Sally. It must be nearly supper time."

They removed themselves from the fence.

"Well—I think we had better be going," said Sally Bett.

"Well—good-bye," said Phoebe Wren.

They began to walk back. They didn't speak, engaged with the tedious process of putting one foot in front of the other. Even proceeding as slowly as it was humanly possible, after a while they got there.

They entered Phoebe Wren's house by the back door.

"After all," said Phoebe Wren wisely, "we have to go home sometimes."

"Your mother's been calling her head off," announced the Wren cook. "Sally Bett's mother's in there too. I think they want you for something."

They thought so too. They entered the living-room. Alice was there, of course, and Mrs. Cooper and Mrs. Wren.

"Hello, dears, we've been waiting for you," said Mrs. Wren, too pleasantly.

"And where did you get those beautiful dolls?" asked Mrs. Cooper.

"Mr. Valentine sent them to us."

"That's right," declared Alice, "I found the cards and they said: **'From Mr. Valentine'.**"

"Who is Mr. Valentine, Phoebe?" asked her mother.

"Oh, he's just a fr'en'," said Phoebe Wren.

"But where did you meet him?"

Phoebe Wren appealed to Sally Bett.

"Well," said Sally Bett, "well—we found him in the telephone-book."

"You what?"

"We just opened the book any old place, and then Phoebe said, 'Eeney-meeney-miney-moe,' and put her finger on him," explained Sally Bett patiently.

"Go on," ordered her mother.

"That's all," said Sally Bett, "'cept we rang him up."

Alice had the telephone-book and was ransacking through it.

"Here it is," she announced triumphantly. "E. J. Valentine."

Mrs. Cooper looked at Mrs. Wren.

"Oh, my dear," said Mrs. Wren, "that's the rich, retired old man who lives in the large house. He banks with James. Of all people in that book, they would have picked on him."

Mrs. Cooper said:

"Sally, tell mother this instant what you said to Mr. Valentine. Did you ask him to send you a doll?"

"No," said Sally Bett stoutly.

"Well, what did you say then?"

"I just said that we had no mamma, and no papa, and no valentines."

"What?"

"Well—that's what Mrs. Merchant said at the book circle, and Phoebe and I were sitting on the stairs, and it was raining, and we just thought it would be sort of nice——"

Mrs. Cooper looked faint, but no fainter than Mrs. Wren.

"Mother's so ashamed of you," she said to Sally Bett. "How could you do a thing like that? How could you?"

Please turn to Page 34

ROMANCE COMES TO HER AT 40

Trained Nurse recommends **LIFEBUOY** *for perfect skin health . . .*

Read her letter:

"In my capacity as a Maternity Nurse, I have used Lifebuoy Soap which has been recommended by leading doctors. I have reared a family of five and have never known one of them to have any skin or infectious complaint. We have used Lifebuoy Soap in our home for the past twenty-five years and can highly recommend it to everyone."

A LEVER PRODUCT

All over the world . . . every day
MILLIONS USE LIFEBUOY!

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Things That Happen

TOLD BY READERS

EXCITING or humorous incidents brought to your knowledge may be of interest to others. Tell them to The Australian Women's Weekly and mark your envelope "Things That Happen." Items must be true, and must not have been published before, or submitted to other journals. Payment for every item used in this section will be posted to contributors immediately after publication.

An Inquisitive Seagull

WHEN my uncle was fishing at Sussex Inlet (N.S.W.) on New Year's Day, a large seagull pecked his bait, and the hook became caught in its mouth. The gull flew away screeching, with my uncle still holding the line. He "played" it until the seagull was exhausted and it dropped to the sand. Uncle then gently removed the hook from its mouth, and in a very few minutes it recovered and flew off to join its mates. This must surely be a most unusual incident, catching a seagull on a fish-hook.—J.E.

Feline Extra Outsizes

BONDI'S (Sydney) monster cat, "Felix," which died a little while ago, weighed 22½ pounds and was claimed to be a world-beater in weight.

However, West Australia has a cat which weighs 35 pounds, measures 37 inches from nose to tail, is 14 inches across the shoulders, and 33 inches in circumference. Its paws measure two inches across. "Gibson," as the cat is called, is now seven and a half years old, and its owner is Mr Turner, of Wimbledon. Probably the heaviest cat in the world, though, is "Tiny Tinker," owned by Miss C. G. Durham, of Ilford, Essex (England), which weighs 36 pounds 6 ounces.

Not even America can boast of a heavier domestic cat, surely!—K.F.

❖ ❖ ❖

Isn't the World Small?

MY doctor wanted me to have a complete change away from everyone that I knew, so ordered a sea trip. Four days out on my way to the Barrier Reef I had discovered as fellow passengers two old schoolmates whom I had not heard of for thirty years, a man who was my nextdoor neighbor when nine, a man who lives in my present street, one of my husband's inspectors, and the owners of two of the islands turned out to be old acquaintances.—J.A.B.

❖ ❖ ❖

When Politeness was a Pleasure

DURING the recent heat wave, as I wandered through the basement of one of Adelaide's department stores noted for the pleasing personality of the assistants, I bought and started to nibble at an ice cream. Suddenly I was brought to a standstill by a persuasive "May I help you?" Being unable to reply, I smilingly shook my head, gripping my ice more firmly. As I passed on I thought how much one misses when without a sense of humor —E.B.

❖ ❖ ❖

Just Common Sense, Really

I WAS helping some spinster friends to do up some hats for the summer. I suggested that we needed some ribbon. They brought out two boxes of lovely pieces. I was told that one box contained the lengths from their late mother's wreaths, and the other those from father's.

"Our dear parents hated waste," they explained, "so we pressed them, and find them very useful at times."

I must confess I felt a bit creepy, as I made bows and used the ribbons in various ways. Yet how sensible they were. They had loved their parents dearly, and knew how pleased the old people would be that the ribbon was a comfort and help to them.—A.C.

PICNICKING with "NALLY"

Continued from Page 31

After the tablets have been weighed and put in the die the other half of the die is placed in position in an electrically-controlled hot press. A few minutes, and it is removed to another press and cooled before being opened.

Only a few minutes have elapsed, and what was before a handful of colored discs is now a dish, a little rough round the edges, perhaps, but a dish, of smoothly-blended colors and intricate design.

It now goes to a special lathe to have those rough edges smoothed down; then it is carefully cleansed before being glazed. The formula for the glaze, which was evolved after months of experiment, is naturally a deep secret. The article is now tasteless and odorless, besides having that highly-polished finish which is exclusive to Nally ware and which lasts the lifetime of the article. After being dipped, the article goes through other processes, but these are closely-guarded secrets. And, as John said, "that is that." The article is finished now and ready for use.

My interest did not lessen as I went into the storeroom and saw the shelves and shelves of varying articles of Nally ware. There were tiny thimbles and egg-cups, round plates and square plates, cups and saucers, cruets and jugs, charming nursery mugs and plates—everything you could possibly want for that week-end picnic—ashtrays, powder boxes, cream jars, and a most attractive vanity-set, besides the scores and scores of toothbrush-holders, caps for bottles, and radio equipment.

One thing did I see that intrigued me immensely, and that was a cup and saucer of plain black, and I was very surprised to learn that it was a discontinued line, as Nally found that few people liked black. For my part, I immediately had visions of a gay yellow cloth and a complete picnic-set in black. The possibilities seemed limitless to me—but, then, I adore black china.—PAT BARRY.

AT LAST!

the Comforter you have been looking for! When not being used, it screws into a dust-proof cap and can be pinned to baby's dress. There it is shielded from flies and dirt, and remains pure and clean.

Made of unbreakable "Bakelite," these new Comforters can be boiled daily. And they're so attractive! A full range of colours available to suit everyone's taste. The price is just 1/-.

Obtainable at chemists only, or post free direct from

WATSON'S HYGIENIC COMFORTERS

477 Kent Street, Sydney. M2728.

SUNBURN

REXONA relieves stinging heat

The soothing, healing properties of Rexona Ointment take all the sting and heat out of sunburn the instant you apply it. Rexona leaves the skin cool and healthy, and prevents painful blistering.

Always use Rexona Ointment and Soap for . . .

Chafing, abrasions, ulcers, skin blemishes, dandruff, rashes, piles, eczema, all skin complaints.

Rexona the rapid healer OINTMENT & SOAP

REXONA PROPRIETARY LIMITED

PULSFORDS

119 BATHURST ST., SYDNEY (between Pitt & George Sts.)

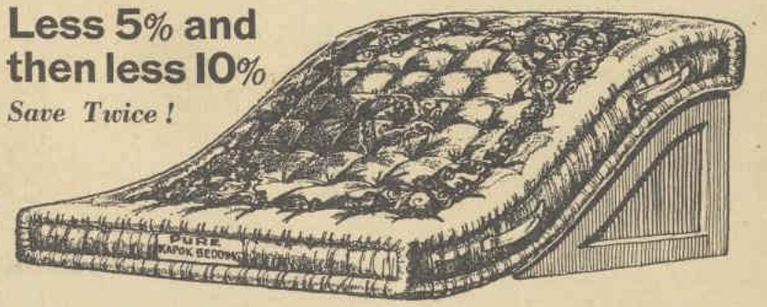
GREAT ANNUAL SALE

CLOSES ON FEBRUARY 28th

QUALITY BEDDING AT DOUBLE DISCOUNT

Less 5% and then less 10%

Save Twice!



Every Mattress Guaranteed Quality

The best sale snap in years! Guaranteed quality Bedding is rarely reduced in price, but we have pleasure in passing on to you a **special manufacturer's discount of 5 per cent., as well as the sale discount of 10 per cent.** All qualities and prices are included, so hurry to get your share of the Bargains.

Examples: Single Bed Mattress, filled best quality kapok, 2ft. 6in. Usually 16/11, less 5 per cent., 16/1. **Sale Price**, less 10 per cent. 15/6

Double Bed Mattress. Usually 65/-; less 5 per cent., 61/9, and less 10 per cent. 55/7

Usual Prices for Single Mattresses range as high as 82/9, and double size, £5/10/-.

All less 5 per cent., and then less 10 per cent.

"Bathurst" Special

£3/3/- MATTRESS 53/10

Pulsfords own "Bathurst" Mattress, guaranteed to contain only best quality Kapok, covered in pink or blue Damask. WEIGHT OF EACH MATTRESS is 32lbs. Now offered at double discount. Usual £3/3/-. LESS 5 per cent., 59/10. LESS 10 per cent., 53/10.

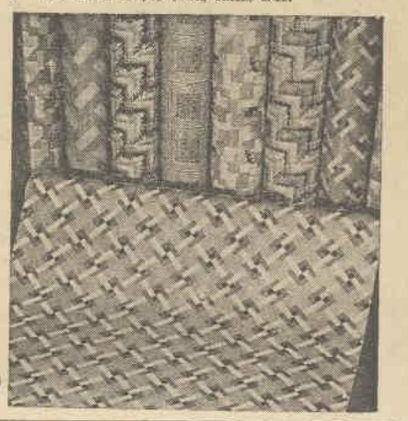
PILLOWS. Usually, each, 4/6. LESS 5 per cent., 4/3; LESS 10 per cent., each., 3/10.

New Shipment BRITISH LINOS less 2/- in the £

and Linos. have gone up!

Just as this new shipment of the latest in Linos. came off the "Otranto" last week, a cable arrived informing us of increase in prices! But we bought before the rise and this saving is yours, whilst present stocks last. But what a chance to save! During Sale time all the new patterns are showing, *marked at 2/- in the £ below usual prices.* Come in to-morrow without fail! All 6ft. wide.

Usually 5/9, 7/6. SALE PRICE, yard 5/2 & 6/9



DEFERRED TERMS *arranged on all* SALE PRICES

Special Bedstead Offer

29/3

Comb. Bedstead

We have sold dozens of these special Bedsteads to keen sale shoppers. Strongly made, with combination wire mattress, 2ft. 6ins. wide. Usually 32/6. SALE PRICE 29/3

3ft. wide. Usually 37/6. Sale, 33/9.

BED SETTEE

Strongly made and nicely finished with cretonne-covered cushion, complete. Special Sale offer. Usually 57/6. SALE PRICE 51/9

PULSFORDS

119 BATHURST ST., SYDNEY (between Pitt & George Streets.)

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Mr. Valentine's DAY

SALLY BETT didn't know how she could, so she stood on one foot and kept still.

"What did you do?" asked Mrs. Wren of her offspring.

"I helped," admitted Phoebe Wren. "I helped quite a ~~lot~~. I told him where we lived, and our names."

"You may go to your room and stay there until I call you," said Mrs. Wren in the voice there was no denying.

"Sally," began Mrs. Cooper when Mrs. Wren left off, "you go straight home and up to your room, and wait until I come. Leave the doll here."

They put down the dolls, and left. Sally Bett walked across the street, and up to her room.

"I'm not her little girl at all," she thought; "I'm adopted."

She sat on the bed dismally. She supposed she would get spanked. She supposed so. If only her mother would spank her through her clothes, but she wouldn't. No—she would take her into the bathroom. It was too awful even to think about.

"Oh," said Sally Bett, with a little sigh. "I do hope she reasons with me."

Pretty soon she heard steps in the hall, and the door opened and her mother walked in.

"Are you going to spank me?" asked Sally Bett in a small voice.

"No," said Mrs. Cooper. "You're almost nine years old. You're too big to be spanked. To-morrow afternoon Mrs. Wren and I are going to take you and Phoebe over to Mr. Valentine's. And the two of you are going to go in by yourselves, and return the dolls, and tell him how deeply sorry you are, and that you've come to apologise."

Sally Bett knew immediately that she'd rather be spanked—through her clothes or not.

"You may stay in your room. Annie will bring your supper to you here."

When she was alone again, Sally Bett went to the window and stuck her head out as far as possible, and looked across the street at Phoebe Wren's window. A little white hand waved forlornly back.

Soon she heard her father drive up in front. She opened the door a crack and listened. She heard her mother going to the front door to greet him. She heard her mother's words:

"Oh, Peter, what do you suppose Sally's done now?" And she told him the whole story, concluding, "Where on earth does she get these ideas . . . And Mrs. Wren says——"

Continued from Page 32

Sally Bett closed the door. She wished very much Phoebe Wren was there with her. She saw herself getting very ill and her mother wringing her hands and saying, "Oh, Peter, we should have been nicer to our little Sally." She even considered running away, but it was cold outside, and, besides, she was hungry. She wished that to-morrow would never, never come. She wished this most of all.

Sunday came, and breakfast seemed to be almost at once followed by dinner, and soon it was late afternoon, and Sally Bett's mother was saying.

"Sally, put on your best coat and hat, and be sure your hands are clean. We're going now."

Presently Mrs. Wren came over with Phoebe, who had on her best coat and hat, too, and the two mothers climbed into the front seat of the Cooper car, and the little girls climbed into the back. The mothers held the dolls.

Sally Bett and Phoebe Wren talked very little, but sat very close. Finally the car came to a large house and stopped.

"This is the place," said Mrs. Cooper cheerfully. "I phoned Mr. Valentine, and he is expecting you. Here are the dolls."

"Won't you come in with us, please?" begged Sally Bett, very polite all of a sudden.

"No, dear."

"And, Phoebe," said Mrs. Wren, "remember everything mother told you. We'll wait here for you."

They descended from the back seat, taking just as much time about it as possible. They hoped a car would run over them or a tree fall on them, or the house burn up, but nothing happened. They took the dolls, and they started for the door.

It was a carved oak door, and there was nothing friendly about it. They stood looking at it uncertainly, and then Phoebe Wren looked back and saw her mother motioning to her to ring the bell. She put up a finger and gave it a gentle poke, and now they were so frightened their bare knees knocked. They stood close together, Phoebe Wren's clammy little hand clasping Sally Bett's.

The door opened, and a maid in a black dress and white apron said, "Come in. He's expecting you." They cast one look at their mothers, and followed the maid down a long hall, and into a big, cheerful room with books right up to the ceiling.

There was a fire crackling in the fireplace, and at a large desk sat an elderly man who stood up when they entered, and proved to be very, very tall.

Sally Bett didn't wait for him to say anything. She began her speech in a carefully coached voice.

"Thank you very much for this doll," said Sally Bett, "but I can't keep it."

There was more—much more—but when she held out the doll and realised it was passing out of her life forever, she forgot her speech, and Phoebe Wren couldn't help her out.

"Here's mine, too," said Phoebe Wren, "and thank you, but my mother says I must give it back."

"If you hold them on their heads you can see their pink tongues under their teeth," volunteered Sally Bett sadly, "and their hair is real, too. My brother says it probably came off a dead Chinaman, but my sister says what of it, that's a sure sign it's real."

"My sister says they cost two pounds if they cost a penny," said Phoebe Wren, "but my mother says it wouldn't make any difference if they only cost a farthing 'cause we'd have to give them back anyway, and why on earth did we have to pick on you of all people in the telephone book?"

"And so," said Sally Bett, "and so we came to tell you—"

They both tried very hard to remember just exactly what it was they had come to tell him. Mr. Valentine was looking at them gravely, but he had a nice face, even if he was about old enough to die.

"And so we've come to tell you," said Phoebe Wren desperately.

"That you're sorry?" asked Mr. Valentine in a nice voice.

"Well, no——" admitted Phoebe Wren truthfully, "but mother says we can't go to Jimmy Graham's birthday party unless we say we are, so we've come to 'pologise."

There, it was all out. There was a silence.

"Well," said Sally Bett nervously, "do you excuse us?"

"You see," said Phoebe Wren, "it was raining, and we didn't have anything to do, and so—"

"So you got into trouble."

He was smiling.

They smiled, too.

"Did you think that I was the man who sends the valentines?" he asked.

"No-o-o-o," said Sally Bett. "That's what makes it worse. My father says it's the duplicity of the thing."

"Do you suppose," asked Mr. Valentine, "that if I gave the dolls back to you your mothers would let you keep them?"

They hadn't expected this. Sally Bett looked at Phoebe Wren, and then shook her head.

"You don't know our mothers," she told him. "It wouldn't do any good. They'd just make us give them back."

"Perhaps," said Phoebe Wren, "if you kept them for a while until they sort of forgot a little—"

"Exactly," said Mr. Valentine. He took the two dolls and set them high on a shelf, so their legs hung down, and they looked so very nice, if a little forlorn.

"They'll be perfectly safe here. Nobody will touch them."

Sally Bett and Phoebe Wren felt much better now.

"Our birthdays are in May," suggested Sally Bett. "Perhaps you could give them back then."

"I wouldn't trust to that," declared Mr. Valentine. "If I were you, I'd come over and see them occasionally. We could have cream buns. You like cream buns?"

"Oh, yes," they said in one breath.

He was nice. He was just about the nicest thing that had happened to them since Christmas.

"Well," said Sally Bett, "I 'spect we'd better be going. Good-bye, then."

"Good-bye," he said.

He went out with them to the car, and put them in the back seat as if they had been grown up. He told their mothers it was quite all right, and that he had asked them to come to see him again soon. And their mothers said, of course, they could come.

PRESENTLY Sally Bett nudged Phoebe Wren and crossed her fingers. This meant a secret. And Phoebe Wren nodded back.

"Well," said their mothers, as soon as the car was out of Mr. Valentine's sight, "was he nice?"

"Yes," said Sally Bett very casually.

"Well, was he cross?"

"No," said Phoebe Wren, even more casually.

"Well, what did he say?"

"Oh, nothing," they both said at once.

Their mothers exchanged a look which meant, "What on earth do you suppose happened? Perhaps we should have spanked them after all."

Sally Bett and Phoebe Wren didn't see it. They were happy again.

"Don't you feel much better now that you've done the right thing?" asked Mrs. Cooper. "Aren't you glad that you told him you were sorry?"

Fortunately she did not see their shining faces. Soon they began to giggle a little, very quietly. They were themselves again.

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It is on your *digestion* that the modern pace first tells. Gradually you absorb less of the essential nourishment in your food. Appetite fails a little, sleep comes less easily, nerves begin to lose their tone, energy begins to flag.

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RESULT OF TEST

Diastatic power of
BOURN-VITA - - 49.8 (*Lintner value*)
Diastatic power of Next Highest
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Diastatic power of the lowest 2.2; the average of the eight tested being 12.1.

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Inspired by the Colorful Loveliness of Simple Garden Flowers . . . .

BERTHA MAXWELL
Designs a Flowered Bedspread!

For This, Her Second Exclusive Feature to The Australian Women's Weekly . . . Thereby Opening Up a New Avenue in Service for Our Needlework Lovers

ALTHOUGH in the past it has been possible to obtain exclusive designs in traced linen for the home, this is the first occasion in which a charming coverlet stamped ready for working in simple stitches has been made available to our readers.

The bedspread, measuring 72 by 80 inches, in finest quality British unbleached calico, may be had for 12/6 (plus 1/- postage), or 15 by 20 transfer containing the twelve flower motifs, each motif measuring about 3 by 3 inches, but shown here in miniature form, may be had for 9d. post free.

A COVERLET of flowers—what a charming possession for a small girl, or for any girl who uses one of the pretty little modern bedsteads of to-day! One quails rather at the thought of embroidering a spread, but the one shown here has been designed to meet the needs of those who have little time to spare for needlework; it does not in the least resemble the tedious work of leisured past days.

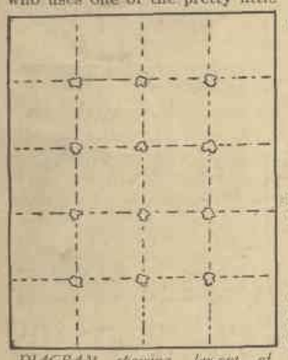
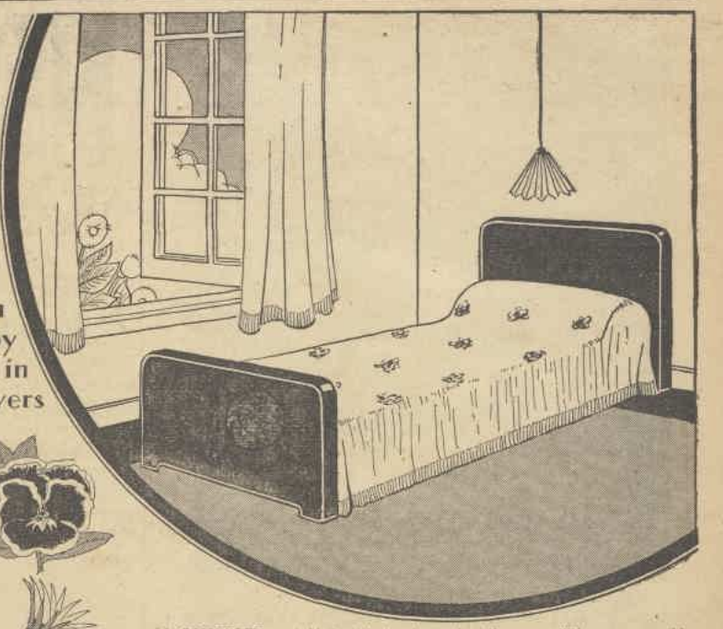


DIAGRAM showing lay-out of transfers on single spread. Creases are dotted lines. This is given for your guidance in case you have your own material for a coverlet and only need the transfer.

THESE ARE the well-known favorites of the garden used by Bertha Maxwell. The twelve of them may be had on a transfer sheet for 9d. to decorate all manner of lovely things for home or personal adornment. Each motif measures about 3 x 3 inches.



A COVERLET sprinkled with lovely garden flowers. What more could a girl want—unless it be curtains to match! The bedspread carrying these charming floral designs by Bertha Maxwell may be had for 12/6, plus 1/-, postage. Note capacious size—72 x 80 inches.

Enduring Charm

Traced for a single bed, this spread, in finest quality British unbleached calico, measuring 72 x 80 inches, is procurable ready for working from the office of The Australian Women's Weekly for 12/6; those who cannot call and wish to have it posted, should add 1/- for postage. A transfer sheet, giving the twelve flower sprigs for those who already possess a piece of linen or calico, costs 9d. post free.

The material used in the traced spread is a fine quality unbleached calico, the creamy tint of this material being an ideal background for colored flower work. All Australians know this favorite old calico, so strong and hard wearing, always improving in the wash. It is at present immensely popular for needlework, especially for bright, quick work on articles for daily use, and no one need hesitate to use it because of its simple name. Note: The edges of the spread have been left plainly cut for hand-hemming or banding in color.

THE twelve flowers used in this spread are all well-known garden favorites of simple form and lovely color. It will not matter what shades are used in the work, but a better general effect will be obtained if soft, slightly pastel tones are used in every motif.

In the case of verandah beds, seaside cottages, and country places, the colors may be deeper and more pronounced, but this question may be left to the worker's own taste.

For those who are not decided on the matter, these color notes will be helpful: Violets, purple with yellow centre, dark green leaves; carnation, reseda green leaves and stems, flowers pink, red, yellow or mauve, the edges of the petals being stitched with a slightly contrasting tone if liked; daffodils, golden yellow with deep green leaves and stems; pansy, all shades of purple or blue, yellow centre, medium green leaves; fuchsia, light green leaves, flowers red above and purple below, or pink and mauve, or all salmon pink; rose, reds, yellows, or pinks, deep leaves; peas, all shades of purple or mauve, pinks, yellows, or reds; gerbera, dark green leaves and buds, flowers red or pink, the shaded petals being a deeper tint than the light ones; daisy, yellow with brown centre, mauve with purple centre, blue with yellow centre; phlox, all shades of reds and pinks; zinnias, pinks, reds, and yellows or orange; nasturtium, yellows, reds, or salmon pink, light green leaves.

Arrangement

THE little picture showing a spread in use on a bed indicates the manner of placing the twelve motifs so that they are all seen and none are lost out of sight in the folds. The diagram also shows how this result is obtained. In the traced spread, the arrangement is settled.

Those who use the transfers will find the easiest method of finding the places is to fold the material in even sections, and place the designs where the creases cross. An even better way is to lay the material out on a table or bed, and measure with a ruler and pencil; about fifteen or eighteen inches apart will give a good setting for the flower motifs.

The Transfers

THE transfer sheet (15 x 20 inches) gives the twelve flowers; they must be cut apart carefully for using. The outlines are all bold and simple, each motif measuring about 3 inches each way so that they show up well on the surface of so large a thing as a bed cover.

The Stitches

THERE is no need to trouble one's head about strange and complicated stitches, just one or two needle actions will do all this work quickly and well.

The most rapid method of all is mere outlining, which can be filled and enhanced by running the needle up and down the outlined flowers and leaves to give a little solidity like darning.

Satin stitching over a little padding is always a sound method, and one which everyone knows; just a few under stitches then sewing over and over on the lines of the shape.

For large leaves or flowers, a rather deep buttonholing all round the edges is always lovely, especially if there is a line or two of padding stitches beneath it. Long-and-short stitches, using many shades of color, will appeal to workers who have a good deal of time to spare, and will produce the rich effect of needle-painting which is always so perfect to the eye.

Threads

STRANDED cotton of good make will fill all the needs of this work. Two or three strands should be used, always keeping the work bold and strong; tiny, niggardly stitching is not correct on a bedspread.

Needleworkers who do not wish to make a bedspread will find the transfers useful for dozens of purposes; these small motifs are simple and unconventional, and may be freely used for frocks, pockets, aprons, bags, cushions, curtains, or small tablecloths.

And when the spread is finished, how lasting and lovely a set of matching curtains would be!

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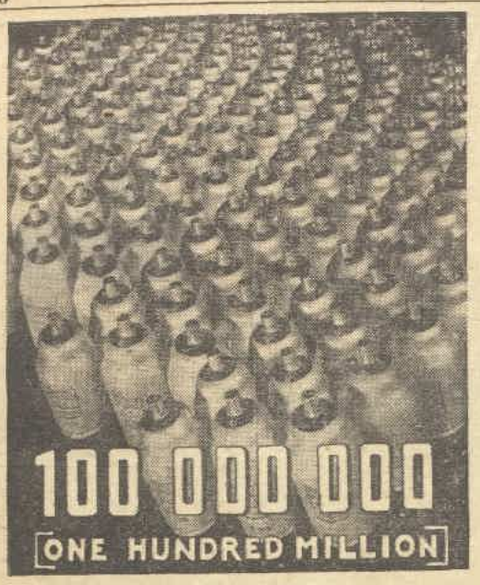

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GENUINE VINCENT'S A·P·C POWDERS & TABLETS

NEEDLEWORK NOTIONS.

Conducted by EVE GYE

An Adorable Wee Frock

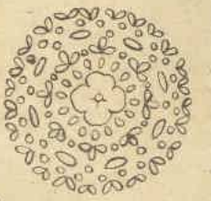
You can make it for the pattern is available . . . and exclusive to the Australian Women's Weekly!

Chubby little dears, from two to four years of age, would just love to strut round in this little frock. With its two important pockets, its Peter Pan collar, decorated with the little motif you see here worked in French knots, it's so dainty, so becoming.

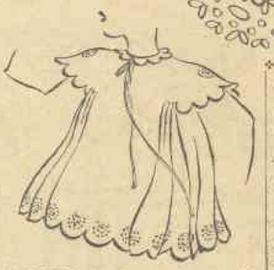
YOU will require one and a half to one and five-eighths yards of 30-inch material.

Sheer lawn, linen, or voile is suitable, and if made in white it can be laundered as often as is necessary, and will come up fresh and dainty as new after tubbing.

The pattern, which is hand-cut, comprises five pieces, viz.: half-front and back of yoke, half-skirt, and collar and one sleeve. When cutting, see that notches correspond.



THE PATTERN for this adorable frock (exclusive to our readers), to fit wee girlies from 2 to 4 years, is obtainable for 8d, post free. Decorate it with little motifs, traced from the design shown left. See article.



THE DESIGN shown above could be utilised to decorate a little frock of this type. No pattern available.

Before the collar and pockets are added to the frock trace off the motif shown here by placing carbon paper face downwards on the material and running over the design with a sharp-pointed pencil.

Make certain that the design is in the correct place. And then work it in French knots, or in any way you fancy, using several pretty colors.

The other little frock shown gives you another idea for using this motif to sweet advantage. Please note that patterns are not available for this frock—I give it only as a suggestion.

Dressmaking Worries . . .

A Remedy for a Collar that Won't Set Properly and Pleats that Tend to Bulge.

DRESSMAKING is such a worrying business to the amateur—and especially to the business girl who runs up her frocks on Saturday afternoons at home. So many things go wrong without the slightest provocation.

And pleats are the most tiresome things! They must hang perfectly, or

DO YOU find it difficult to make a collar set properly? Note diagram and follow hint given here.

their whole appearance is spoilt. So take this little hint:

In addition to stitching them for several inches, down, machine-stitch them across for two inches. The stitches do not show at all on patterned materials, and very little on plain ones.

And the collar presents a problem. It often sets badly for no apparent reason.

So nick the inside edges deeply at the back before sewing to the neck-line. Then buttonhole-stitch the rough edge with large stitches well apart.

Check Gingham and Fast-Color Linora!

It's a Fascinating Combination for a House Apron!

For the house, a sturdier, prettier apron was never conceived. It will keep your frock very clean, and gives, too, a pretty welcome to the unexpected visitor.

SNUGLY fitting to the figure, the apron has a straight front panel of fast color linora, with a scalloped hem.

YES, this apron positively speaks for itself—smart, neat, and form-fitting. Price, 2/-. Send for it.

From the waist, side panels of check gingham harmonise with the linora. There's a tie of the check round the waist, and a band round the neck. Pockets of the linora are let in at each side.

The apron may be obtained in five pretty shades—dark blue, light blue, cherry, green, and brown. And at the bottom of the front panel is embroidered a simple little design to be worked.

Send in to our office 2/- (which includes postage) and we will forward the apron immediately. When ordering, please specify which one you want.

"There's no doubt about it, my dear..."

"I've tried all sorts of creams for my complexion, and of course they do help. But there's no doubt about it, my dear, you've got to treat your complexion from inside as well as outside. I mean, you must avoid digestive troubles and constipation, or you'll never have a clear skin. Our doctor says the same thing, and on his advice I've started taking Sanitarium San-Bran. I had a packet sent up by the grocer, and it's delicious. So nicely flavoured! I really enjoy it. I just add a couple of tablespoonsful of San-Bran to my porridge every morning; that provides sufficient roughage to keep the bowels regular.

You can see for yourself that my complexion is reaping the benefit. And I feel so perfectly well! You must try San-Bran. It's wonderful for you!"***

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Obtainable all leading chemists or direct from C. WINTER, 63 Wellington Street, Kew, Vic.

FERTILISERS—MAGICAL AIDS TO YOUR GARDEN

What To Use, When To Use . . . and How To Use

—By THE OLD GARDENER

A THOROUGH understanding of what you are doing is a great help to anybody. And if you know why you are to use a certain fertiliser on your garden, instead of just mechanically following directions, you will have far better results. If your plants are stunted and sickly, for instance, you will know that nitrogen is required, if lacking in vigor in the early stages, phosphoric acid. But read here for yourself what the Old Gardener has to say on the subject of fertilisers.

WELL, we have a great deal of work to face in the next few weeks. Those Iceland poppies, ranunculi, anemones, cinerarias, freesias, stocks, and other plants will have to be transplanted into their permanent beds, and what a display we are looking forward to in the coming spring—though, of course, that seems a long way off!

Before we transplant those seedlings we must prepare our garden, so to-day, if we have a chat on the various fertilisers, how to mix them, and their uses to plant life, it will, I am sure, be of great advantage to amateur gardeners.

The more knowledge one has concerning the requirements of various plants and of the methods of thorough and suitable cultivation, the more successful will our garden become.

I have from time to time advised you on trenching, digging, and manuring, but very few people thoroughly understand the various fertilisers.

While each plant food element is certainly a necessity, and all combine variously together in the organic structure of the plant, of the three essential elements we should know what particular influence each exerts.

For instance, nitrogen has a particular influence on the development of leaf and stem, a most essential preliminary to the successful growth of any plant, because so much nourishment is obtained through its leaves. So nitrogen is considered the most important of the various plant foods. If you notice your plants stunted and not growing well, with a sickly color and scanty foliage, you should know immediately nitrogen is required.

Phosphoric acid has a most pronounced influence on plants, imparting general vigor, particularly in the early stages of growth of the plant, and in the development of flowers and seed.

Potash has a special function in the forming of carbohydrates in plants, that is, sugar, starch, etc. So this, too, is necessary for all root plants.

Lime is chiefly applied to improve the physical condition of soil. By its use heavy clay soil becomes more open and friable, and sandy soils are rendered more retentive.

INDIA is the home of this beautiful Rajah lily, grown in the back garden of Mr. Montserrat, Willoughby, N.S.W. It is a sturdy plant—grows in any soil to a height of three feet, and features a peculiar, speckled, flowering stem. The lily shown in the picture measures 35½ inches in length!

So you will understand that the application of fertilisers effects chemical improvements in soil, and they add elements of fertility indispensable to the growth of plants. So, in using fertilisers, remember that the plants' requirements are phosphoric acid, potash and nitrogen.

Good All-round Mixture

A GOOD, serviceable mixture to suit most soils and plants is:

5 parts of superphosphate.
5 parts of bone dust.
2 parts of sulphate of potash.
2 parts of sulphate of ammonia.

This mixture can be applied with safety at the rate of 4 oz. to the square yard. Lightly fork it in. In most gardening operations, fertilisers can be used in liquid form. Apply it in small quantities, and often.

2½ ozs. of any good garden fertiliser which is soluble in water, such as superphosphate, sulphate of potash, and nitrate of soda or sulphate of ammonia, mixed to the strength of 1½, ½, and 1½ oz. respectively, thoroughly mixed together, and stirred in 4 gallons of water, makes a good nutritive solution.

Measure by the Spoonful

IN applying chemical fertilisers to the garden, it is always convenient to measure out by the spoonful. Of course, this only applies to the small user. Here is a table which should help the amateur:

1 teaspoon equals ½ ounce.
1 dessertspoon equals 1 ounce.
1 tablespoon equals 2 ounces.

These measurements are fairly accurate. When I say a spoonful, I mean piled up in the ordinary way, as you would dip a spoonful of sugar, for instance.

Organic manures and fertilisers have in most cases to undergo a number of chemical changes in the soil before the plants are able to take them as food. Hence the special value of those that are soluble in water, as they can be applied at the right turn when the plant is needing them.

Nitrate of soda, for instance, is readily and totally available without requiring further change. Sulphate of ammonia is quick acting, but has to undergo a change before being absorbed by the plant. Dried blood is slow acting, and has to undergo a change before it is useful. Blood and bone also has to undergo a change, but is rich in phosphoric acid.

Bonedust is very slow acting; in fact, takes longer than any other, and, of course, stable manure must be thoroughly decomposed before it is any use to plant life, but it assists the soil generally and adds humus which is so valuable in the garden.

Pot plants, if watered once each month with a good nutritive solution, similar to that which I have already mentioned, will benefit greatly and always have that rich, healthy appearance which gives joy to the grower.

Well, I must be off again. Time flies on, and I have such a lot to do. See you next week!

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MOONLIGHT *Comedy*

"AND he, I think, likes me. But Midge would do anything—literally anything—to marry him. And she will have him to herself practically all the winter, whereas in a very few weeks I shall be obliged to return to school. So you see, if anything is to happen—I mean between myself and Lynn—it must happen quickly."

Uncle Oswald concentrated his attention for a moment upon his cigarette.

"Have you mentioned this subject to your aunt?" he asked.

"N-no. Not because I am trying to hide anything—please don't think that! But Aunt Frances could hardly be of practical help, because she has never had experience in such matters—personal experience, I mean."

"Which implies that I have?"

This time Sonia not only smiled, she laughed, though not too loudly—indeed, with more tenderness than amusement. "When I was a very small child," she told him, "Aunt Frances took me to visit you at Windham. You and Aunt Frances went to a reception somewhere; and while you were gone I came across a tin box in the back of one of your bookshelves. . . ."

"Wasn't it locked?" he asked with a slightly startled look.

"Yes, dear. But the key was in it. And I was very young."

"Which now leads to what?" he asked, beginning to watch her with closer attention.

"Which now leads to a question that I want to ask you, Uncle Oswald. But first you must know that Midge is terribly modern. She herself proclaims that she is hard-boiled—like an egg, you know, that has been left too long in the saucepan."

"I have seen such eggs."

"She doesn't believe in a thing that's old-fashioned. She scoffs at Tennyson, for instance. She smokes a lot; drinks a lot; she emphasises most of those things that I was taught to ignore; and she has developed a flair for making witty, bitter remarks."

"I can see her. I can hear her."

"In that event," concluded Sonia, drawing a deep breath, "you are now ready for the question . . . Do you think I have any chance against a girl like Miss Ranford? I mean, of course, so far as Lynn Tucker is concerned. Or do you think that I ought

Continued from Page 6

to forget most of the things Aunt Frances has taught me—and act like Midge?"

To Sonia's great surprise, Uncle Oswald suddenly banged his hand on the table—a most unusual thing for him to do—and almost shouted "No!"

"You mean I shouldn't copy Midge?"

"Copy her? Absolutely no! If that girl had the brains of a gnat, she would copy you!"

"If you could only make that clear——" hesitated Sonia, her eyes shining.

"But it's clear as crystal. The current styles for women tell the story. Consider that dress which you are wearing to-night. It has long, graceful lines—and time after time the theory has been proved that the manners of any age can be determined by the feminine fashions of that age. Abbreviate a woman's dress sufficiently, and you make her hard-boiled and slangy for the simple reason that you have killed all tender illusions regarding her. She is no longer a Phantom of Delight. She is merely a physiological—er—actuality. But lengthen her skirt again, and you will very soon find that you have returned to poetry, conversation, music, and gentle living—to the things, in short, which you know well, but which are so much Greek to the hard-boiled eggs."

As much as Sonia wished to believe, she began to look slightly puzzled.

"But why should a long dress bring back music and conversation?" she asked.

"Because," cried Uncle Oswald, thumping the table again, "as soon as a woman is dressed in a mysterious, romantic manner, she discovers that she has become a mysterious, romantic figure upon the stage of life—an effect that would be ruined if her conversation were limited to such witty, biting sayings as 'Oh, yeah?'—and her music to the singing of 'Cuckoo!' at the proper intervals of a crooner's song."

"I think I am beginning to see."

"But, my dear, it is evident as daylight. Already the reaction is on us.

THIS "BUTCHER BOY" two-piece frock is made of crepe with a ribbed surface which closely resembles wool. It is worn by Sylvia Sidney, a popular Paramount player.

The latest style of interior decoration is Victorian. Salacious dramas are playing to empty seats while audiences at symphony concerts have grown so large that half of them cannot even hear the Wagnerian overtures!"

"Then you think that Midge——?"

"I think that this girl Midge, from what you have told me, comes under the heading of salacious drama. But only for an interval. She, too, will change with the others, because the human race moves round in cycles as surely as the world moves round the sun. Now, when your aunt and I were children, the sun was overhead. Then came the shadows and the night. But now, once more the morning is here——"

A long, lean car slipped past the window and stopped at the front door.

"That's Lynn," whispered Sonia. "He's come to fetch me." Rising quickly, she turned her uncle's head and kissed him surprisingly. "I never told Aunt Frances what I found in the back of your bookcase," she whispered, and with a pat on his shoulder she was gone.

THE Chateau, that evening, was having its formal housewarming—its previous smaller parties, it might be said, having been in the nature of trial heats.

Electricians and florists had been busy throughout the day with tissue paper and balloons, potted plants and flowers, colored lights and lanterns. Now dinner was over. The elders were playing cards, and the younger ones, in grotesque carnival hats, were romping over the rest of the house. An orchestra was installed in the library; the opposite room had been cleared for dancing.

Lynn's brother Ned was standing in the doorway talking to Midge Ranford.

"They don't seem to care much for dancing," said Midge.

"Fed up with it," nodded Ned, carelessly. "Why aren't you out there, for instance?"

"Why aren't you?"

"I've just been telling you."

Ned was the older of the two brothers. He was inclined to be stout, and inclined to be fretful. He had returned from the Continent a few days before, and was soon to enter his father's business.

"That Burgess girl's been stealing the show again," he said with a sly look.

Midge said nothing.

"To say nothing of Lynn," added Ned with a fine pretence of casual utterance.

"Don't think you're breaking my heart. He'll soon be tired of her. I know myself, she makes me feel that I ought to go back to school."

Ned shrugged his shoulders.

"How does she get like that?" he asked.

"Don't be simple. She has a new line. Didn't you hear her at dinner? That Tennyson wasn't a sap? And how they paint china?"

"No; I was eating."

"I'll bet you could beat her at that, even if you were blindfolded."

Ned frowned for a few moments.

Please turn to Page 40 32

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THE BODY BEAUTIFUL

A MOST becoming hair style that bespeaks feminine charm.

Back view: Variation in curl formation—introducing "sausage" curls.

Side view: Soft, undulating waves, sweeping back showing the ears.

PUTTING THE finishing touches to a lovely evening coiffure. Note the comfy chair and modern "expressionistic" background. Within easy reach of the client are magazines—and cigarettes.

Photos by courtesy of Morrison Murdock.

WE *Now* RADIATE *Feminine* CHARM

... so Becoming are Modern Coiffures

By EVELYN

I HAVE had a very interesting talk with a young Australian hairdressing expert, who has just returned from London and Paris, and is full of information concerning the latest hairdressing styles prevailing in those two great centres.

IT was while this young expert, now holder of London diplomas in this art, was dressing the head of the young beauty you see in the picture shown top right of this page that we talked. She was having her head "dressed" for an evening affair. . . Soft waves, sweeping off the face, following the contour of the head, and ending in a barrage of soft, close curls.

Princess Marina style, showing soft curls, taken up to and above the crown. This style can be modified to suit any type of face.

I learned that soft head-dresses reasonably full, yet following the contour of the head, summarises the fashion now. The forehead and temple are no longer left entirely uncovered, as was the case last season. Instead, it is adorned with soft, tapered fringes, curls, bands and coxcombs.

The temples are embellished with covering palm curls, coquettish and intriguing. Many modern sophisticates prefer to show their ears, studs and drops being worn to advantage; while others choose to have their ears partly covered with waves and curls, sweeping back off the face.

More curls are the order of the day in London and Parisian fashion centres. Not the severe sculptured curls of last season, but soft, full, light, well-tapered curls, ethereal in their conception.

The "Streamline" is typical of the curly coiffures, predominant in England and the Continent; the sweep of the waves off the face, the upward movement of curls, rising to and above the crown is definitely the accepted style.

Another striking style for 1935, just evolved in Paris, owes its inspiration to the late Queen Alexandra. It has a cluster of curls on the forehead, the hair being dressed to the top of the head, showing the ears. This is similar to the fashion started by Queen Alexandra, when she arrived in England to become Princess of Wales.

Another new conception of the curl formation is the "sausage" curl—something different (see illustration).

Ornaments are worn in the hair, bandeaux, modernised "Alice" bands, and plaits are still au fait. For evening wear, Viennese women favor ornaments entirely made of hair.

The "Princess Marina" coiffure, the 1935 hair style, was launched at the Hairdressing Fair at Olympia. It is typically modern in its conception, and may be modified to suit any type of face.

In fact, as you well know, Princess Marina is setting many of the fashions—even unto colors—and as this popular Princess has pretty auburn tints in her hair, "auburn tints" are the craze this season. To make way for this craze, the platinum blondes are definitely "out."

In all modern hair styles the cutting and tapering of the hair plays a very important part, being essential to preserve the line and form of the coiffure. This is an art in itself, and should only be trusted to experts. A woman's head may be glorified by dressing her hair simply, and yet she may be made garish by means of admirably made waves badly placed—if the line is not perfect, or the form of the whole is not correct.

The modern coiffure must be modified to suit your own particular type. You must, however, first of all, understand your face. The head-dress must vary according to the expression and form of the face. Take into account the color of the eyes, the shape of the nose, forehead and temples, cheeks and cranium, etc. It is to know how, by proper disposition, the hair will be able to correct imperfections, re-establish certain proportions, and give an agreeable line.

Therefore, a head-dress may be simple, exceedingly so, yet at the same time be more artistic than a coiffure cleverly composed.

I also learned that the World Hairdressing Fair at Olympia was the biggest and most successful yet held. It was under the patronage of Royalty for the first time, Princess Helena Victoria being the Royal patron. An absolute galaxy of absorbing features were to be found—not only ideas connected with every aspect of hairdressing, fittings, equipment, perfumery, toilet and fancy goods, but entertainment of every description.

The street of "Facts and Fancies" was one of the most popular features of the Fair. Twelve attractive young things arranged in beautiful cameo settings adorned one side of the street, wearing head-dresses of unique design. Fantastic in conception, these styles were called "A Dutch Flower Field."

I should say that, in order to make us even more hair and beauty "conscious," apart from being of inestimable benefit to the profession, the staging of a similar exhibition here every year would be an excellent idea.

Commenting on the salons abroad, I was informed that the newer salons are gems of artistic architectural designing, expressionism being largely in evidence.

...WHAT MY PATIENTS ASK ME

...BY A DOCTOR...

PATIENT: What is meant when it is said that a person is suffering from obsessions? Is it a mental disorder, and can one do anything to avoid it?

* * *

OBSESSIVE ideas, generally spoken of as "obsessions," are exceedingly common. They are not confined, as some think, to neurotic individuals alone.

An obsession may be defined as a thought which the individual himself realises is absurd, but to which he must give way in order to obtain temporary peace of mind. Thus disagreeable thoughts may pop into the mind again and again, despite every effort to keep them out.

A young woman may be obsessed with sex thoughts that harass her day and night. A man may keep thinking about suicide, although he really does not want to commit such a deed. A child may keep thinking, over and over again, about some trivial misdeed, about which even its mother has reassured it.

In cases of neurotic obsessions, one meets, for example, with complexes about dirt or contamination which force the individuals in question to wash their hands, over and over again, every time they touch a door-knob, a table, or any object that may not be absolutely clean.

When the obsession has to do with behaviour, it often is spoken of as a "compulsion." These, too, are very common, even among those who are not neurotic.

The impulse to add up the numbers on automobile licence plates is a compulsion. The desire to touch gate-posts, to touch down electric light bulbs, or to avoid stepping on cracks in a pavement—all these are what might be termed normal compulsions.

PEOPLE with obsessions, even if they be severe and torturing, receive, as a rule, little sympathy and even less understanding.

The ideas that harass them seem, to the average person, so nonsensical that it is difficult to believe they cannot be controlled. On the other hand, if an obsession could be conquered by an act of the will it no longer would be an obsession.

What is more, no person with an obsession fails to fight it. Realising how foolish the disturbing thought or act is, they usually do everything in their power to rid themselves of it.

The trouble, however, lies in the unconscious mind—in that deeper part of the individual's thinking which is not directly controlled by the will. No conscious thought is likely to remedy the thinking disorder for long. A patient may succeed for a while, an hour, a day, or perhaps a week or two. But, sooner or later, the obsessing thought returns, despite everything.

Concerning the milder obsessions, to which all persons are subject, treatment is not required. It matters little whether such individuals are occasionally annoyed in so trifling a manner.

With the serious and distinctly neurotic obsessions, however, the case is different.

Here a psychiatrist, a medical man who has made a specialty of mind disturbances, should be consulted. Sometimes he can give relief promptly; sometimes it takes weeks or months to bring about a cure.

EXERCISE FOR BEAUTY

THIS exercise is very good for reducing. Raise your leg straight in front, then bend the knee, and hold it firmly with your hand. Then swing your leg in a circle, sideways and backward.

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MOONLIGHT *Comedy*

Continued from Page 38

"PERHAPS that's another reason why you've been so popular lately," he continued. "People like your wisecracks."

"They can take 'em or leave 'em. They're genuine."

"Look at Lynn talking to her now."

"Isn't it a picture? The marble goddess talking to the young sculptor."

"Presently you'll be saying she backed in the pond on purpose."

Suddenly Midge turned and looked straight at Ned, the imp of inspiration evidently whispering in her ear. "Listen!" she whispered, "speaking of marble goddesses in the water, did you say you'd brought home a box of those moonlight bathing suits?"

"I did!" beamed Ned, looking at her at last with admiration.

"Does Lynn know about them?"

"No; I haven't unpacked them yet."

"Then let's have a bathing party tonight. There's a moon; and what's the sense of having floodlights on the beach if they're never used?"

"Talk about Delilah," said Ned with continuing admiration. "No, not Delilah," he corrected himself. "Who was that clever woman who used poison—the one whose name began with B?"

"Never mind the clever woman whose name began with B; you listen to this: We'll let Lynn give the Burgess girl her bathing suit—personally."

"The feminine touch. Midge, I hand it to you. Once I thought we were in for a frost to-night, but I'm beginning to see that this will be a real, live party . . ."

Sonia had always longed to swim in the ocean in the moonlight; and running out across the beach in the light green bathing-suit which Lynn had given her, she was soon diving through the breakers and making for the quieter waters beyond. There, she told herself, she would be far enough from the floodlights to enjoy the softer radiance of the moon. A heavy sea, blowing in from the south-east, kept nearly all the others close to the beach. The Dragon, Sonia noticed as she rose over the last line of breakers, was a white smother of foam from his flashing eye to where his tail was anchored to the shore.

"I mustn't get too close," she thought. "If the current should catch me and swing me against those rocks——"

She suddenly stopped, gripped by that paralysing premonition of dreadful, inescapable destiny which is the first high climax of nightmare.

"No," she gasped. And then, "I couldn't. But—I have. I've lost my bathing suit."

Her immediate reaction wasn't far from panic. She swam round quickly, in small, erratic circles, splashing more than usual, desperately hoping to see or feel the missing light green fabric.

"But it couldn't float for ever—it would have sunk by now," she tragically thought at last—and that was when she heard the first loud shout of laughter from the distant beach.

"It was a trick," she chokingly told herself a few moments later—and she remembered then that a month or two before she had read that a Swiss manufacturer, whose workmen had left undone one of the things which they ought to have done in the manufacture of artificial silk, had found himself in possession of a supply of thread which was standard in every respect but this—that it dissolved in salt water.

"For practical jokes, they made it into bathing suits—but I never—oh, I never—thought that Lynn would play a joke like that on me!"

Another burst of laughter from the beach told its obvious story—a story which suddenly aroused in Sonia a spirit which was worthy of him who hung so grimly over the fireplace at home.

"No; I'll die first!" she told herself. "And if I can swim round the lighthouse, the joke will be on them. It will be quieter on the other side of the Point, and the tide will help to swing me in towards the cottage."

So settling down to the long task ahead, she started with a slow, steady stroke to where the Dragon's eye swept the sea first with a cold, white stare and then with two red, irritable flashes, as if impatient either at what he had seen, or what he had failed to see.

"Oh, if Aunt Frances could see me now!" thought Sonia, swimming steadily along. "Would she, or would she not, warn me of evil companions?"

Her next thought was a Tennysonian quotation .

"'Break, break, break. . . . On thy cold grey stones, O sea——'"

And her next resulted in an unconscious rhyme.

"I never thought Lynn Tucker would play a trick like this on me."

Again she looked back, more to gauge her distance than to gratify any lesser curiosity, and that was when she discovered that Lynn was swimming after her.

"Oh, Sonia! Sonia!" he shouted. Wait."

"He has a priceless imagination," the last of the Burgesses scoffed to herself, "if he can picture me waiting for him."

And quickening her stroke, she presently discovered that although the eye of the Dragon was now perceptibly nearer, her breath was coming unmistakably faster

"I wonder if he's gaining," she asked cautiously lifting herself to look.

But as far as she could tell in the uncertain moonlight he was further away.

"Oh, Sonia! Sonia!" Again his voice came to her over the water, but this time pitched in a more desperate key.

"'Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky.'" quoted Sonia, grimly swimming on.

But the next time she heard him—wet, ghostly hands seemed to touch her with electric finger-tips.

"Oh, Sonia! Sonia! Help!"

IT would, Sonia knew—at first uncertainly and then more quickly she swam to where Lynn was floundering in the water—it would be out of the question either to help him round the lighthouse or back to the shore. But less than fifty yards from where he was splashing so desperately in the moon-dappled sea, the white, dangerous flank of the Dragon could be seen, the breakers churning and foaming among the rocks.

Now between those rocks, as Sonia also knew, were occasional narrow stretches of sand, barely wide enough to beach a boat in calm weather.

"I shall have to try for one of those," she was presently reasoning to herself, with a clearness and coolness worthy of Uncle Oswald. "Either that—or let him drown—or both drown together."

So she tried for one of those miniature beaches, holding Lynn by the back of a shoulder-strap and inwardly giving him credit for helping with a feeble kick or stroke of his arm, whenever he gathered strength enough to do so.

Putting all her reserves into one last tremendous effort, she was rewarded by the heavenly feeling of sand beneath her feet; but Lynn, swept out of her grasp, was thrown against one of the Dragon's mighty scales with such momentum that he lay quietly on the sand as if he would never move again.

"What is this that's fastened to his belt?" thought Sonia—and saw that it was an extra bathing suit. "He was bringing it out for me," she told herself and, with a choke in her throat, she gave him credit for that, too. A minute later—no longer a maritime Godiva riding Neptune's horses, but conventionally dressed for a modern beach—she had dragged Lynn above the water-line and was anxiously helping him as he tried to sit up and take notice of what was happening in a busy, dizzy, roaring, spray-swept world.

"You've—done it?" he asked at last.

"Yes——" and with one of her quaint gestures, "We're here."

"A mean trick," he continued. "I didn't know, of course. . . ."

"Of course you didn't."

"I'd never swum—more than a hundred yards or so before—but I thought I'd take a chance——"

Slowly, carefully, he rose to his feet.

"Rather damp. I'm afraid—but otherwise in fairly good order."

Sonia laughed as she remembered her own words in the Sea of Swans.

"There's a footpath on the other side of the Point," she said. "Shall we start back?"

"If you don't mind waiting a few minutes more, I'd like to catch my breath——"

"A good idea. If we go higher, we'll be out of the spray."

So, Sonia helping him, they climbed over the boulders till they came to a rocky nook which Nature had fashioned in the side of a ledge. . . . It was there that a frantic searchlight found them nearly fifteen minutes later, but at first neither of them seemed to notice it.

(Copyright)

Worst of all for your figure

....THE OLD-FASHIONED WASHING-DAY

DON'T DEVELOP *that Washing-day droop*

CHANGE WASHING-DAY TO RINSO-DAY

Fifty-two washing-days a year—fifty-two reasons why a woman loses her figure, if she washes the old-fashioned way. Bending over tubs until you are too weary to stand erect again is the quickest way in the world to develop those unlovely middle-aged contours. Protect your figure by changing to modern washing-days—with ***Rinso!***

LITTLE WORK AND NO WORRY WITH RINSO

Dirt just soaks out of the clothes when Rinso gets to work on them. And Rinso is no shirker—not one speck of dirt escapes. You'll have gloriously clean clothes and snowy linen after the easy Rinso washing-day.

How to wash the Rinso way

You don't need any bar soap or anything else with Rinso. Just sprinkle some Rinso into the tub and add hot water. Use enough Rinso to make a good lather. Leave the clothes to soak for an hour or two, or overnight. You'll find the dirt just floats out of the clothes . . . the Rinso suds are so full of washing-power.

Rinso

A LEVER BROTHERS PRODUCT

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AS EASY AS WASHING YOUR FACE *to wipe away* UGLY HAIR

1 Just apply this new sweetly scented beauty cream straight from the tube.

2 After three minutes wash off with water. Every trace of hair is gone.

3 The skin is left velvety soft, smooth and white.

New Veet is the latest discovery of science. It is a perfumed toilet cream which ends superfluous hair in 3 minutes. No fuss or bother. No disagreeable odour. No possible danger. No redness nor irritation.

Never use a razor. It simply makes the hair grow faster and coarser. Beware of the evil-smelling depilatories which burn the skin. New Veet simply dissolves the keratin in the hair and enables you to wash the hair away with plain water. Leaves no ugly dark stubble like the razor because it removes the hair below the skin surface. Veet is just like a face cream and as easy and pleasant to use. Successful results guaranteed or money refunded.

LUXURIANT HAIR FOR YOU

Don't imagine that beautiful hair is just a question of luck. Every woman can have lovely hair by feeding the starved hair roots with Barry's Tricophserous. This fragrant liquid revives the hair, tones up the scalp and promotes luxuriant growth. It drives away dandruff, prevents greyness and falling hair. Excellent as a dressing. Fine for children's hair. Splendid for men. Get a bottle to-day.

BARRY'S Tri-coph-erous For Luxuriant Hair Growth

Sold by all Chemists and Stores, 4/- per bottle.

REALLY *Kills* FLEAS

Then keeps others away . . . . . .

No fleas or lice can escape from Pulvex. Other powders often merely stun parasites. Pulvex kills them and is so repellent that other fleas keep off for days. Pulvex is harmless, even if swallowed—non-irritating—odourless. Your can ensure your pets a flea-free summer if you dust them once a week with Pulvex.

Sold at all good dealers, in tins at 1/3; double size, 2/-.

Wholesale Distributors: Wm. Cooper & Nephews (Aust.) Ltd. 4 O'Connell St., Sydney

PULVEX KILLS FLEAS OFF—KEEPS THEM OFF

Kill Kidney Trouble Quick

Thousands of sufferers from Kidney trouble and Bladder weakness have stopped Getting Up Nights, Leg Pains, Nervousness, Dizziness, Rheumatism, Dizziness, Lumbago, Burning, Itching, Smarting, Acidity and Loss of Vigor by a Doctor's new discovery called Cystex (Sistex). Gently soothes, tones, cleans, and heals raw, sore kidneys. In 15 minutes Cystex starts refreshing your blood. Brings new health, youth, and vitality in 48 hours. Guaranteed to end your troubles in 8 days or money back. Get Cystex at all chemists.

For YOUNG WIVES & MOTHERS

When Baby is Born in Your Own Home

By Mary Truby King

Daughter of Sir Truby King, the World-famous Authority on Baby Welfare.

In a recent article the advantages of a Hospital or Maternity Home confinement were stressed.

There are always a great number of prospective mothers, however, who for various reasons decide to be confined in their own homes, and for these mothers the necessity of engaging a properly qualified midwife or maternity nurse was pointed out.

THE visits of the midwife should set the expectant mother's mind at rest and prove of inestimable help and comfort. Especially is this so when the woman is not within reach of an ante-natal clinic which she can attend fortnightly or monthly.

It is the duty of the visiting midwife to suggest improvements to the mother's home hygiene, if she considers this necessary; to inquire into the history of past pregnancies, abortions, or premature births, and to find out what illnesses (if any) the woman has had.

The midwife should be given every help in this direction—she is not inquiring out of curiosity, but out of necessity, in order to make the way easy for the coming labor.

In the midwife the mother will find that she has a true friend, who will appreciate her co-operation.

Examination of the urine will be undertaken by the midwife once a fortnight from the time of her engagement, and, in the last month of pregnancy, once a week.

The midwife will also impress upon the mother-to-be the necessity for having a thorough medical examination as early in pregnancy as possible, and again towards the end of pregnancy, or at any time when any slight abnormality may be noticed.

She will advise the mother as to the buying and preparation of the necessary articles for the confinement, and see that these are all ready well in advance. If desired, a list of the necessary articles for a confinement at home will be posted—on receipt of a stamped, addressed envelope—from the Sister-in-Charge, Australian Mothercraft Society, 263 Elizabeth Street, Sydney.

It may be that you are already under a doctor's care, or have the attention of your family physician from time to time. If this is so, you will be wise to abide by his selection of a midwife. It is, of course, preferable for the nurse who has been attending you throughout pregnancy to be present during labor, as she knows your history, and is, therefore, in a better position to confine you than a nurse arriving when labor has commenced.

Naturally the final decision on home or hospital confinement is dependent on several conditions, notwithstanding the fact that the patient is comfortably off and wishes to remain at home.

For instance, in cases where a delayed or abnormal delivery is feared, it is the duty of the midwife to consult the doctor regarding the necessity for a hospital confinement. Nurses can, of course, ascertain the position beforehand, fairly accurately, by means of "outward palpitation" and other signs; and in this way the nurse knows when it would be safer for the mother to be confined away from her own home, and will advise her accordingly.

* * *

DESPITE our preference for hospital confinements for those who are not well to do, confinement in one's own home has some advantages, especially for the mother who engages a trained nurse to live-in.

The mother has greater individual care; more companionship, and, perhaps, more appetising meals and greater daintiness in serving than is possible in a hospital. She also has more privacy, and is not kept awake when another new infant arrives! Neither does she have to keep up a conversation with her room-mate (or room-mates) when she wishes to rest or sleep.

The mother who is confined at home may also see the older children of the family when she is well enough—a privilege which is usually forbidden altogether in hospital.

As against this, one has the disadvantages of a home confinement, which were enumerated in the article of 1/12/'34 and which were found to outweigh the advantages, particularly in the case of the middle-class or poor mother.

To Avoid Infection

EVERY effort is made by the midwife to minimise the risk of infection to her patient in child-birth; but she should not be expected to improvise ways and means of carrying out asepsis at a moment's notice.

It is the duty of the mother to provide a full and properly sterilized outfit. The cost need not be great, as most of the articles can be converted into requisites for baby's use later on—i.e., the draw sheets can be turned into sheets for baby's cradle, and the binders into towels, etc.

The room to be used for labor should be airy, light and clean. It should be well "turned out" as close to the time of labor as possible. No furniture or ornaments which are not really necessary should be left about. Mats and floor rugs should be removed, likewise curtains. Dust should not be flicked with a dry cloth from one part of the room to another—the dusting cloths used for the labor room must be damped so that dust is not scattered.

The bed chosen should be a single one, if possible. A firm mattress should be provided. The bed should be placed with the foot end towards the window. There should be ample space to move about on each side of the bed, and a good light near the bed in case baby is born during the night.

Provided that the husband is a healthy man, and that the bed is clean and in good order and has not been used for the nursing of any infectious case, there should be no danger in using a double bed, though it is more awkward for the purpose than a single one.

All beds, whether at home or in hospital, are "specially made up" for confinement cases, and the methods used are in themselves a safeguard against infection.

May we stress that complete understanding and co-operation between mother, midwife, and doctor will make for a happy and normal confinement. Each has an important part to play in the birth of the child, the nurse's role being in no way inferior to that of the doctor. It is impossible to pay in money the full worth of a capable midwife's services. Such can only be repaid by friendship and gratitude.

GIFT SUGGESTIONS

Best Hand-ground Stainless Steel Table Cutlery, oval handles.

TABLES 21/-
DESSERTS ..... 19/- } per half dozen

Illustrated Catalogue of Table Cutlery and Table Silverware. Post Free.

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AMICUS CERTUS IN RE INCERTA

"A sure friend in uncertain times."

Investment in HAPPINESS

Let 1935 bring you contentment and peace of mind.

THE New Year is now well in its stride, so to say. The first flush of excitement is passed. Each man and woman is settling down to the task of making the most of 1935; settling down to the task of wringing as much contentment and satisfaction out of it as possible. There will be almost as many ways of securing satisfaction as there are men and women, but there is one way above all others of winning peace of mind and contentment as to the future, and that is the way of adequate Life Assurance.

Membership in the A.M.P. Society opens the door to happiness and a contented mind. Through membership men and women can complete their plans for the future with the sure knowledge that their old age will be sweet and comfortable and that, when the Great Reaper gathers them in, their loved ones will be protected.

That more and more men and women are realising the value of A.M.P. membership is shown by the ever-increasing volume of assurance effected with the Society:—

New Policies issued:

1931	- -	£11,500,000
1932	- -	£13,600,000
1933	- -	£15,600,000
1934	- -	£17,900,000

A large proportion of this immense volume of new assurance was taken out by existing members of the Society who had come to realise the great merit of their policies, and the contentment to be had out of them. The balance was taken out by other citizens attracted to membership for the same reasons.

The A.M.P. Society is a mutual or co-operative body. All its great assets belong to its members. If you, who read this, are not a member, get in touch with the nearest office of the Society, or the nearest representative, or write for full particulars as to the advantages of membership. Correspondence welcomed and answered promptly.

A.M.P. SOCIETY

SIR SAMUEL HORDERN, Chairman.

C. A. ELLIOTT, F.I.A., Actuary. A. W. SNEDDON, F.I.A., General Manager.

HEAD OFFICE: 87 Pitt Street, SYDNEY.
D. E. WALKER, Manager for New South Wales.

Branch Offices at
Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, and Hobart.

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Thought a Wash Was Needed

SOME years ago, while a Japanese boat was in Brisbane, two of the officers off the boat were in the habit of calling at a cafe in the city, being always attended to by my friend. When the boat was about to sail these officers wished to give her a present, and my friend, not being able to make them understand what she wanted, kept rubbing her hands around her neck (meaning she wanted a necklace). Imagine her surprise (and, yes, horror) when her present arrived and, on opening it, she found several bars—not cakes—of soap.—E.V.P.

* * *

Unusual Accidents

A FRIEND of mine was recently swimming at a North Coast (Q.) seaside resort when a shoal of mullet darted past her. In passing, one of the fish struck her arm, and left portion of one of its fins embedded in her flesh! So tightly was the fin wedged in, that a doctor had to perform a minor operation to remove it. That same day another bather had the rather humorous experience of catching a mullet in his bathing suit! He plunged the suit into the water to wash it, and brought it out with a small mullet trapped inside!—S.

HOST HOLBROOK says: I have sliced Olives ready for sandwiches. Have you ever tried an olive sandwich?***

SKIN DISEASES and THEIR ORIGIN

(Extract from a lecture given by Mr. J. J. McHugh, M.P.S., Ph.C., the well-known Skin and Scalp Specialist)

Many people who ignore Dandruff seldom realise that many skin infections are caused by this complaint. Seborrhoea of the scalp, face, and body. Inflamed Eyes (Conjunctivitis), Eczema. Pimples and Rash on the face, chest, and back, in the majority of cases find their source in Dandruff. Many scalp infections are due to too infrequent washing of scalp, use of wrong soap, etc.

During the past 12 years Mr. McHugh has been remarkably successful in treating an amazing number of cases hitherto considered hopeless.

His secret formula and special diagnosis treatment have made him famous in all parts of the world for the successful treatment of Eczema, Psoriasis, Varicose Veins, Varicose Ulcers, Tinea, Ringworm, Acne, Pruritis, Eczema, Seborrhoea, Infantile Eczema, and other distressing complaints, when all other treatments have failed. Free Advice is available to readers of the "Women's Weekly" by writing to or calling on

Mr. J. J. McHUGH, M.P.S., Ph.C.,
Consulting Chemist and Skin Specialist,
First Floor, 124 W. Liverpool St.
(Opp. Snow's), Sydney. Phone: MA3628.

HOURS: Monday to Thursday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon.***

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BEST RECIPES

Big Prizes to be Won in Our Weekly Competition

For just the few minutes' effort required to write down a recipe, we are offering you a chance to win £2/10/-!

Each week, for the recipe our cookery expert, Ruth Furst, adjudges best, we give £2/10/-, with a second prize at £1, and six consolation prizes at 5/- each. The recipe need not be original, but it should be tried in your kitchen before submitting it.

This week a South Australian reader wins first prize with "Cabbage Rolls."

CABBAGE ROLLS

Half boil an autumn cabbage in hot water; drain and separate the leaves. Have uncooked, very finely-minced meat mixed with half amount of boiled rice. Season with salt and pepper, moisten with milk, and put some of this mixture on each leaf. Then roll up, tie with thread, put into saucepan, add water to cover, and simmer gently for an hour. Serve with mashed raspberries, slightly sweetened.

First Prize of £2/10/- to Miss A. M. Currall, 26 Clifton St., Prospect, S.A.

COFFEE FOAM.

One and a half cups black coffee, ½ cup milk, 3 eggs, 2-3rds. cup sugar, 1 heaped tablespoon Davis gelatine, vanilla essence.

Place coffee, milk, gelatine and 1-3rd cup sugar in double saucepan, and cook for about ten minutes. Beat yolks of eggs and 1-3rd. cup of sugar together. Add to mixture and

HE: What about a spot of lunch?
SHE: Hungry?
HE: Yes—and just wait till my teeth get into that "Best recipe" winner of yours!
(Girls, remember the old saying: "The way to a man's heart . . .!")

cook for another ten minutes, stirring all the time. Remove from fire. Beat whites of eggs to a stiff froth with vanilla essence. Stir briskly into the coffee mixture. Place in a wetted mould to set. Turn out and serve with whipped cream.

Second Prize of £1 to Mrs. V. E. Beech, 82 Old South Head Rd., Waverley, N.S.W.

MACARONI CROQUETTES.

Take 3 ozs. cooked macaroni, 1 egg, 3 ozs. grated cheese, salt, pepper, made mustard to taste, 1 oz. butter, 1 oz. flour, ½ gill milk, and breadcrumbs.

Cut the macaroni finely. Melt butter, add the flour and blend well. Stir in the milk a little at a time (off the fire), return the pan to the fire and stir till the mixture boils and thickens, add the macaroni, grated cheese, and mustard; stir for 4 minutes, remove pan from the fire and cool mixture slightly. Separate white from yolk of egg, add yolk to mixture, and beat well in; add seasoning, and turn out on a plate to cool. Divide into even portions, flour a board, and shape portions into cutlets. Beat the white of egg lightly, slightly brush it over the cutlets, dip each in breadcrumbs. Fry in hot fat, drain on greaseproof paper. Place a small piece of uncooked macaroni on the pointed end of each cutlet. Dish in a circle on a hot dish. Garnish with fried parsley.

Consolation Prize of 5/- to Mrs. E. Lennox, Wavyr-Lea, Ballarine, Vic.

KANGAROO'S TAIL.

Place kangaroo's tail in salted water over night. Next morning rinse, wipe, dry, and joint. Flour well and place in a round ring in an enamel saucepan. Now peel lots of small onions and fill the centre. Add dripping, pepper, and salt, and brown well. Place saucepan on a cool part of stove and cook slowly for 2 hours. Strain fat away, add about 1 pint water, and make a rich brown gravy. Serve with any liked vegetables.

Consolation Prize of 5/- to Mrs. M. F. Abbott, Orange St., Condobolin, N.S.W.

PLUM TRIFLE.

One lb. plums, 4 sponge cakes, 2 ozs. crystallised ginger, 4 ozs. sugar, whites of 2 eggs, ½ pint fairly thick custard.

Simmer the plums with ½ gill water and drain off juice. Pass the fruit through a sieve, and sweeten both juice and pulp with the sugar. Crumble the sponge cakes, place in the bottom of a glass dish, pour over the juice, and let it soak in. Make a boiled custard with the yolks of the two eggs, and pour over the mixture; beat the whites up very stiff, and beat into the pulp until foamy. Pile over the dish and sprinkle with fine strips of crystallised ginger, and stand in a cool place till required.

Consolation Prize of 5/- to Miss L. R. Rowland, Everton, Fear St., Greenslopes, S. Brisbane.

HOT EGG COFFEE.

Half cup well-made strong coffee, 1 tablespoon cream, 1 well-beaten egg, sugar to taste (about 2 teaspoons), pinch of salt, 3 drops vanilla.

Break egg into a bowl, beat it till frothy, and add coffee, which should be boiling hot and mixed with the other ingredients. Whisk well and serve at once. This makes a generous cupful. If desired, the amount of cream may be reduced or increased. This is for one person.

Consolation Prize of 5/- to Mrs. W. H. Coyne, 38 Shyester St., Torrensville, S.A.

CHILDREN'S PARTY DECORATION.

Procure a penny tube of silver cachous, and a halfpenny strip of liquorice from the confectioners. Stone some soft, raw prunes, make a tiny hole with a pointed match for the eyes, and press a cachou in each. Cut a thin strip of liquorice for the tail and press the prune into the shape of a mouse. Ice the cake and press the mice into position with the tails hanging over the edge.

Consolation Prize of 5/- to Mrs. R. McAllister, 32 Empress St., Hurstville, N.S.W.

HOT OYSTER BISCUITS.

Half lb. self-raising flour, ¼ lb. butter and lard mixed, ½ teacup milk, pepper and salt to taste, lemon juice, and as many oysters as required.

Sift flour and salt, rub in the mixed butter and lard, and mix with the milk, roll out quarter inch thick and cut into small rounds. Brush each round with melted butter, lay large oysters on half the rounds, sprinkle with salt, pepper, and a squeeze of lemon juice, cover with the rest of the rounds, placing buttered sides on the oysters. Brush with milk, and bake in a moderate oven. Serve hot.

Consolation Prize of 5/- to Mrs. F. Dess, Swan Rd., Sth. Toowong, Brisbane.

For the Housewife's Notebook

HANGING OUT COLLARS

AFTER washing soft collars, run a piece of narrow tape through the buttonholes and peg the ends of tape to the line. This prevents any dirty marks on tabs and collars.

INHALE CAMPHOR

WHEN you have a cold in the head, you may relieve it by putting a few pieces of camphor in a jug of hot water and inhaling the fumes.

SALT FOR STAINS, ETC.

RUB a little salt on spoons or cups that have been stained by eggs, and the marks will at once disappear. About a handful of salt, also, put on a fire, will soon clear it for grilling.

GREY FLANNELS

IF grey flannels are ironed on the wrong side, they will retain that new look, and last much longer.

CANE CHAIRS

CANE chairs may be made taut again by washing in hot water and lemon juice and setting to dry in the sun.

COAT COLLARS

TO clean a greasy coat collar, rub it with a piece of clean flannel which has been dipped into a solution made from grated raw potato and a little cold water. In this way the cloth is cleared up and brightened at once.

HOST HOLBROOK SAYS:

"When the family's at breakfast do not forget to serve my new Marmalade.

Aye, it is delicious — a pure product made from a good old English recipe with freshly gathered Seville oranges."

HOLBROOKS MARMALADE

M5.

HOST HOLBROOK says: For pickling or table use Holbrooks Pure Malt Vinegar; it is a brew of excellent quality ★★★

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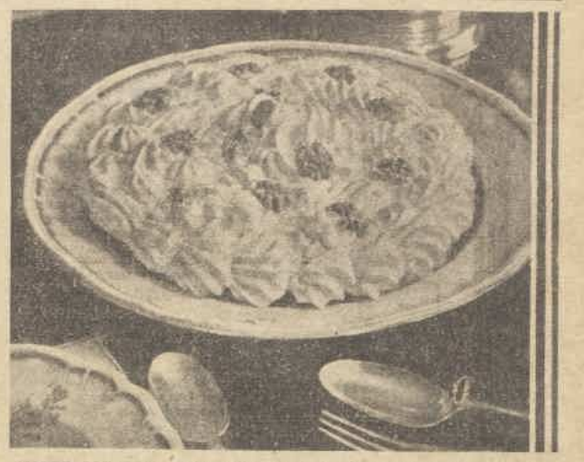
SERVED ... with a Sprinkle of ARTISTRY

These Cool, Inviting, Warm-Weather Sweets

THERE is something particularly attractive and tempting to the appetite about a good cold sweet in summer time, especially if it is nicely cooked and tastefully served. These tested and proved recipes I am giving this week will, I am sure, meet with the approval of your family and friends.

By RUTH FURST
Cookery Expert to The Australian Women's Weekly.

PINEAPPLE sliced across the top, scooped out and the fruit mixed with sugar, allowed to stand, and then returned and topped with whipped cream makes a luscious sweet.



"MORE, PLEASE!" This will certainly be the cry when you serve this most nourishing, light-as-a-feather sweet—Apple Florentine.

THE ordinary cold, stewed fruit and blanc mange is all very well, but these are far more exciting, quite simple to make, and can be prepared well beforehand.

Note that when mixing gelatine and milk, always add the dissolved gelatine to cold milk. If hot, it is likely to curdle.

One level dessertspoon powdered gelatine equals ¼ oz., and is sufficient to set 1 cup liquid.

REENISH CREAM

One pint cream, 1 lemon, 1 orange, 6 tablespoons sugar, 4 tablespoons sherry, 1 oz. powdered gelatine (4 level dessertspoonsful), 6 tablespoons warm water, carmine.

Dissolve the gelatine in the water. Slightly beat the cream. Add the lemon and orange juice, sherry, sugar, and the warmed gelatine. Color half pink. Pour the pink portion into a wetted mould. When set, pour in the white portion. Leave on ice till set. Turn out in the usual way and garnish with whipped cream and chopped nuts.

VERY INEXPENSIVE are the ingredients of orange cream baskets—and very nourishing and tempting to the eye, too.

CHARLOTTE RUSSE

One pint stiff red jelly, 8 sponge fingers, ½ pint cream, 6 tablespoons milk, ½ oz. gelatine, 1 tablespoon sugar, essence.

Make the jelly a little stiffer than usual. When cold, pour a small quantity to the thickness of one inch into a wetted charlotte russe mould. Allow to set well. Arrange the split fingers flat against the side of the mould, alternating rounded and flat sides of cakes, wedging in well. Whip the cream. Add milk, sugar, essence, and dissolved gelatine, and, when beginning to set, pour into the centre. Place on ice till set. Cut the fingers level with the cream. Turn out carefully on to a flat glass stand. Garnish the base with well-chopped jelly and roses of whipped cream.

VANILLA BAVAROISE is the children's delight. It can be poured into individual fancy moulds, or into one large mould, as shown above, and decorated with chopped nuts or cherries and angelica.

PINEAPPLE CREAM

One pineapple (or tin of crushed pineapple), 1 cup sugar, 1 cup water (if fresh pineapple), 2 eggs, 1 tablespoon cornflour, 1 tablespoon butter, whipped cream, chopped nuts, lemon juice.

Break up the pineapple, put into a saucepan with sugar, water and butter. Cook till soft. Add the blended cornflour, yolks, and lemon juice. Cook for 2 minutes. Allow to become quite cold; then add the stiffly-beaten whites. Pour into a glass dish. Cover the top with whipped cream and sprinkle thickly with nuts.

CHOCOLATE GLACE

Quarter pound butter, 1 lb. sweetened chocolate, essence vanilla, 3 eggs.

Grate the chocolate finely; add the butter, and allow to melt over a low flame, but on no account to boil. Then add the yolks one at a time. Mix well. Cook for one minute. Allow to cool. Beat the whites of eggs to a stiff froth and stir into the chocolate mixture. Add essence. Pour into small glasses and chill. Decorate with whipped cream, cherries, and chopped nuts.

FRUIT IN JELLY

One packet red jelly crystals, tinned or stewed fruit.

Make the jelly a little stiffer than the directions given, and using, when possible, any syrup from the fruit in place of water. When cold, pour a little into the bottom of a wetted mould. Allow to set. Lay some well-drained fruit on the jelly. Pour over a little jelly. Allow to set and continue in this way until the mould is full. Place on ice, and when set turn on to glass dish. Decorate with whipped cream, chopped jelly or fruits.

PINEAPPLE SUPREME

Remove the stalk from the pineapple; then cut off a slice. Scoop out the centre and chop it finely. Add sugar to taste, and allow it to stand ½ hour. Return to pineapple shell and garnish the top with whipped cream. Or the pineapple shell can be filled with fruit salad (mixture of oranges, bananas, passion-fruit and pineapple), and top decorated with whipped cream and chopped nuts.

APPLE FLORENTINE

Puff pastry, marmalade jam, apples, sugar, whites of eggs, walnuts.

Grease a round dish or pyrex plate and cover thinly with the pastry. Spread evenly with marmalade jam. Fill with apples which have been peeled and sliced thinly. Sprinkle with sugar. Cover with a thin layer of pastry. Bake in hot oven at first, then cooler, till apples are cooked. Beat whites stiffly and add sugar. Cover the cooked pastry with meringue. Decorate with a ring of 10 or 12 shelled walnuts. Return to a very slow oven and cook slowly to set the white of egg. Serve hot or cold.

ORANGE CREAM BASKETS

Oranges, 2 tablespoons fine sugar, grated rind of 2 oranges, yolks 4 eggs, whites of 3 eggs, ½ pint warm milk, ½ oz. gelatine, 1 tablespoon water, juice 2 oranges.

Take as many oranges as are needed. Cut a slice off the top of each, and carefully remove the pulp without damaging the shell. Mix the sugar and rind well together. Add the yolks, then the beaten whites, and whisk well together for a few minutes. Pour on the milk. Stir over boiling water till custard coats the spoon. Dissolve gelatine in the water and add to custard with the juice. When setting, fill orange shells. Leave till firm. Decorate top with whipped cream and serve.

TONEY CREAM

One and a half pints milk, 4 tablespoons sugar, 2 level dessertspoons powdered gelatine, 1 cup water, 1 lemon, 1 orange, 2 eggs.

Peel off the rind from lemon and orange very thinly. Add to the milk and warm over the flame. Strain on to the well-beaten yolks. Cook over boiling water till it coats the spoon. Leave till cold. Mix sugar and gelatine. Add water, lemon and orange juice and warm over a low burner, cool, and add slowly to egg mixture. Fold in the beaten whites. Pour into large wetted mould or individual moulds if liked. Leave on ice till quite set. Turn out in the usual way. Decorate base with triangles of red jelly and the top with crystallised cherries.

VANILLA BAVAROISE

One pint milk, yolks 4 eggs, ½ cup sugar, ½ oz. gelatine, essence, chopped nuts.

Scald the milk, pour on to the beaten yolks and sugar; then cook over boiling water till custard coats the spoon, but it must not boil. Add gradually the dissolved gelatine. Pour into wetted individual fancy moulds or one large mould, as illustrated, and leave till set. Unmould. Sprinkle with chopped nuts, or decorate with cherries and angelica.

CHOCOLATE MERINGUE

Three tablespoons bread crumbs, 1 tablespoon butter, 2 dessertspoons grated chocolate, ½ pint milk, 3 tablespoons sugar, 2 eggs, 2 tablespoons sugar for meringue.

Put the milk, butter and chocolate into a saucepan. Bring to the boil, pour on to crumbs. Leave covered 10 minutes. Add the beaten yolks and sugar. Pour into piedish. Bake in a moderate oven till set. Beat the whites stiffly. Add the sugar and pile on top of the chocolate foundation. Bake in a slow oven till meringue is crisp and brown.

LEMON CUSTARD

Two cups sugar, rind and juice of 1 lemon, 1 dessertspoon butter, 1½ tablespoons cornflour, 2 cups water, 1 egg.

Put the water, sugar, rind, juice lemon and butter into a saucepan. Bring to the boil. Then pour carefully on to the blended cornflour. Return to the saucepan and stir over heat until clear and thick, stirring all the time. Allow to become almost cold, then add the well-beaten egg. Serve with stewed fruit.

VELVET PUDDING

One pint milk, 2 tablespoons cornflour, 2 eggs, essence, 2 tablespoons sugar.

Blend the cornflour with a little milk. Put the remainder of the milk on to boil, and when boiling stir in the cornflour. Cook for 2 minutes. Add sugar, yolks, and essence. Pour into a greased piedish, stand in a tin of cold water, and bake in moderate oven for 10 minutes. Beat the whites stiffly, add 3 tablespoons sugar, and heap roughly over the mixture. Return to oven till meringue is crisp and a pale brown.

APRICOT SOUFFLE

Three eggs, 1 tin apricots, 3 oz. sugar, lemon juice, ½ oz. gelatine, 6 tablespoons cream, 3 tablespoons water.

Put yolks of eggs into a basin, add sugar, and beat well. Rub sufficient apricots through a fine strainer to fill a cup. Add to the eggs, etc. Stand over boiling water and stir until hot. Leave till cold. Dissolve gelatine in the water, add to the apricot mixture with the lemon juice, and then stir in 2 tablespoons of the cream, first whipping it until stiff, and the beaten whites. Turn into souffle case. Leave till set. Turn out and decorate with rest of cream.

SANDWICH PASTES

A fine variety for appetising Sandwiches includes:
Asparagus, Celery, Gherkin, Bean, and Tomato Pastes, Sandwich Spread.

Rosella

That's ANCHOVETTE FISH PASTE
SANDWICHES ALWAYS POPULAR
-DELICIOUS ON HOT TOAST TOO!

..I make sure of Health

TO ensure robust health and abundant vitality at every season, make "Ovaltine" your daily beverage. In summer it is particularly valuable because it provides, in a light and easily digestible form, the nourishment which ordinary summer foods lack.

"Ovaltine" is all health-giving nourishment, scientifically prepared from the highest qualities of malt, milk and eggs.

Cold "Ovaltine" is quickly and easily prepared. Just add "Ovaltine" to cold milk or milk and water, and stir it for a short while with an egg whisk—or use a shaker.

"Ovaltine" does not contain any Household Sugar. Furthermore, it does not contain Starch. Nor does it contain Chocolate, or a large percentage of Cocoa. Quality always tells—insist on "Ovaltine."

TRIAL SAMPLE.—A generous trial sample of "Ovaltine," sufficient to make four cupsful, will be sent on receipt of 3d. in stamps, to cover cost of packing and postage. See address below.

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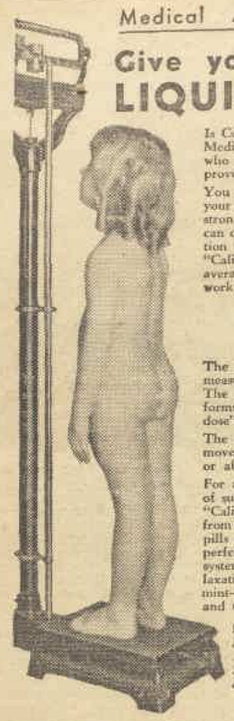
Medical Advice to Mothers

Give your Children a LIQUID Laxative



Is Constipation in children curable? Yes! Medical men have proved it and parents who have followed their advice have proved it.

You can never cure constipation by giving your boy or girl pills, tablets, or any strong, habit-forming purgative. But you can correct this condition by gentle regulation with a natural liquid laxative. "California Syrup of Figs" will make the average child's bowels as regular as clockwork in a very short time.

Why Hospitals use a Liquid Laxative

The dose of a liquid laxative can be measured exactly to meet individual needs. The action is therefore under control. It forms no habit; no need to give a "double dose" next time.

The right liquid laxative brings a perfect movement, with no discomfort at the time, or afterwards.

For a child's use, be sure it is composed of suitable ingredients and above all, safe. "California Syrup of Figs" is entirely free from synthetic chemicals often found in pills and tablets. It is a perfectly safe, perfectly suited preparation for any young system. Fruity and delicious, a natural laxative, flavoured with cassia, cloves, and mint—no wonder the taste is delicious—and the effect so wholesome.

IMPORTANT. *"California Syrup of Figs" is sold by all chemists and stores, 1/6—or 2½ times the quantity for 2/10. Say "California" and do not accept any bottle which does not say "Califig".*

FATTY FINN! The best-loved character who has ever come to life in juvenile papers. The new colored FATTY FINN'S WEEKLY will be on sale for your kiddies each Tuesday. Don't let them miss it!

RINGS *for* SALE

Continued from Page 13

"NOT at all," said Ann. "I'd like to help." And then something made her add, with a little burst of confidence: "You see, no one knows, but I was married once, and things went wrong, but—but I still treasure the ring. Good-bye, I must fly."

She hurried back to the shop, wondering what on earth had made her act on impulse like that. Perhaps it was because little Mrs. Phillips reminded her of herself when she was first married, young and unsophisticated and easily hurt.

"Hope they'll be happier than we were," she murmured to herself, and proceeded to sell a platinum ring to another of those fatuous young couples who smiled into each other's eyes all the time, and would have forgotten to pay for it all, if Ann hadn't called them back.

CLOSING time, at last. Ann hurried round to her bed-sitting room, and a few minutes later she was out again, the ring carefully tucked away in her handbag.

Green Mansions was not far from her room, and she toiled up six flights of stairs, then knocked at the brightly painted door at the top.

Little Mrs. Phillips opened the door to her herself. She was wearing a blue overall and her face was flushed from cooking.

"Oh, you angel!" she cried. "You're just in time. Do come in."

She drew her into the flat.

"We're still trying to rescue the ring," she informed Ann. "Pat remembered he'd got a pal in the engineering line, so he phoned him to come and see if he could do anything, and they're at it now. But I'm sure they'll have no luck without proper tools. Is this the ring? Thank you so much, I'll take the greatest care of it."

And then, just as she was slipping the ring on her dainty finger, there came a mighty shout from the bathroom.

"We've got it!"

Mrs. Phillips fled, leaving Ann standing in the hall.

"Oh, you clever, clever people!" she cried.

"It was Mutt's idea, really," explained a voice, evidently her husband's. "He managed to unscrew the twiddley bit at the bottom of the pipe, and out it came, with a lot of soapy slime."

"Then I shan't want this ring after all," said Mrs. Phillips. "Such a nice girl from a jeweller's shop lent it to me, Mutt, said it was her most treasured possession."

"Well, you'll be able to return it to her right away," said another voice, a deep voice that made Ann suddenly turn pale.

She knew that voice—and Mrs. Phillips said he came from an engineering firm—and, of course, lots of Geoff's pals called him "Mutt." . . .

She turned to fly, but it was too late. All three of them came out into the tiny hall, Mrs. Phillips, a fresh-faced boy, with his arm round her, and a tall man with a shock of red hair—her husband!

"Here she is!" cried Mrs. Phillips. "This is my husband, and his friend, Mr. Field. Miss—Miss—why, I don't even know your name——"

"But I do," said the tall man unexpectedly. "Ann, how are you, after all this time?"

"I'm very well, thanks, Geoff," said Ann sedately, though her heart was racing along in the most surprising fashion. "And you?"

"Oh, I'm rubbing along—I'm in London just now, on a business trip."

"I say," exclaimed young Phillips, "if you two know each other, why not stay on to supper with us?"

But Ann caught the look of horror on his wife's face. Upsetting all her arrangements, with his mother arriving at any moment. . . .

"No, really," she said hastily, "I must fly——"

"I've got to go, too," said Geoff.

They shook hands with the young couple, Ann promising to come again another day, then somehow or other she found herself going down all those stairs with Geoff.

"Queer, wasn't it," said Geoff, "running into each other like that? May I take you out to dinner, now we have met again, Ann?"

"I—oh, very well, thanks," said Ann.

So presently they were facing each other across a little table in an out-of-the-way restaurant where they used to go in the old days. And Geoff remembered that Ann liked hors d'oeuvres better than soup, and Ann chose a savory instead of a pudding, because she knew Geoff liked savories.

For a while they talked commonplaces, then Geoff said abruptly:

"So you kept the ring, after all, Ann?"

"Yes, Geoff!"

"Why didn't you sell it?"

"I—oh, I don't know, I just couldn't, Geoff."

"But you lent it to that little kid to-day?"

"Yes. And you came to help them out, too, Geoff. Why?"

"Oh, I don't know." Geoff looked sheepish. "They're so utterly young and foolish and inexperienced, just—just like we used to be, Ann."

"Oh, Geoff, just exactly what I thought!"

"I say, did you really?" asked Geoff eagerly.

"Yes, and I—I hoped they'd be happier than we were."

"Couldn't be happier than we were at first," declared Geoff stoutly. "Remember how we scraped and saved to buy our first wireless set? You made jumpers for your friends——"

"And you gave up smoking and walked to the office——"

"And then the time we couldn't afford a proper holiday, so we went camping instead——"

"And the tent blew down and an old pig walked in——"

"And the time I got my first rise——"

"We came here to celebrate, and had champagne——"

"Those were good old days, Ann——"

"Yes, Geoff," said Ann softly.

"Ann?"

"Geoff?"

"I was rather a beast, sometimes, to you——"

"Oh, Geoff, and I was an utter little pig sometimes——"

"Ann?"

"Geoff?"

"I believe we've both learned a bit since then. I suppose you wouldn't—we couldn't start all over again?"

"Oh, Geoff, let's!"

He took her in his arms.

It was the next day, and Ann was selling a ring to an utterly fatuous young couple who simpered and gazed into each other's eyes, and made little futile remarks. When they'd gone, at last, Ann smiled across at Edie.

"Rather sweet, weren't they?"

Edie gasped.

"I say," she exclaimed, "last night I thought you'd gone batty, and to-day I don't think, I'm sure!"

(Copyright)

Memory

I met Memory face to face:
And suddenly I felt ashamed
Of all the years I'd fled from her,
Denied the very name of her,
And dumbly sought the death of her . . .
She looked so old and tired, so frail and worn.

I bowed my head:
She took my hand and whispered, "Come."
And we went down strange, untravelled ways
Along the thoroughfares of Time,
Until we stood at the world's wide rim
In the greyness of perennial dawn:
The wind of spheres blew coldly
On breast and lips and hands
And on the wide and treeless plains
Stood great Colossi,
Monumental gods of ebony
Who bore the lowering heavens on their heads.

And Memory said:
"When I am dead I shall be laid here
On the short, stiff grass,
Here in the unearthly winds,
Here at the feet of the graven gods
In the eternal gloom. . . .
But by my side your youth will lie,
And the sweetness and the tenderness of life.
And would you have me die?" she said.

With fearful eyes,
Through stiff, cold lips I whispered,
Whispered against the ghastly winds
In the horror of unending dawn,
"I would not have you die."

—P. DUNCAN-BROWN.

When you remove cosmetics the Hollywood way, you guard against unattractive Cosmetic Skin . . .

POWDER and rouge every day? Skin delicate? Even then there's no need to worry about getting unattractive Cosmetic Skin.

Even though you may already have detected warning signals—tiny blemishes, enlarging pores, blackheads, perhaps—you can guard against this modern complexion trouble the Hollywood way.

Cosmetics Harmless if removed this way

Cosmetics need not harm even delicate skin unless they are allowed to choke the pores. Many women who *think* they are removing cosmetics thoroughly are actually leaving bits of stale make-up in the pores day after day.

Then, the pores become clogged, distended—Cosmetic Skin develops.

Lux Toilet Soap is made to remove cosmetics *thoroughly*. Its ACTIVE lather sinks deeply into the pores, carries away *every vestige* of dust, dirt, stale cosmetics. Before you apply fresh make-up—ALWAYS before you go to bed—remove stale make-up thoroughly with Lux Toilet Soap. Protect your skin—keep it lovely.

You can use Cosmetics as freely as you wish, if you guard your skin as I do—with gentle **Lux Toilet Soap**

ELISSA LANDI
Starring in Paramount's Production "ESTER MADAME."

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THIS *Most Alluring Young* BLUE JACKET

. . . No. 2 in our exclusive series of knitwear . . . just simply refuses to be difficult in the making, despite its important origin!

IN FACT, the utter simplicity of this tailored jacket is its chief attraction—and who can resist the appeal of blue? As you can see at a glance, two blues are utilised, a lovely saxe and rich navy. The navy outlining collar, front, and sleeves lifts it a little higher into the realm of smartness.

FROM Vienna, as you all know, a Continental centre of chic and charm, came this inspiration.

And providing a complete change from the more difficult designs, the ease with which this woolly garment can be made will find many admirers.

***ALTHOUGH** two blues were used for this smart jacket, you can use any desired combination of colors to suit your own particular coloring.*

Wear a suede or leather belt with it, if you will, in lieu of the knitted belt, for added smartness.

Here are the expert directions which, if followed, will reward you with a jacket that will be a credit to your simple skill with the needles:

Materials: 8 skeins saxe blue crepe wool, 2 skeins navy-blue crepe wool, pair No. 10 bone needles, a buckle, a few press studs.

Measurements: Bust, 34 inches, length of underarm seam, 16 inches, sleeve seam, 7 inches.

THE BACK

With saxe wool begin at lower edge, and cast on 132 sts. Knit into back of cast on sts. Knit in garter stitch until work measures 6 inches from beginning, then k. 2 together each end of the needle every 6th row until there are 118 sts. on the needle.

When work measures 16 inches from beginning, shape armholes by casting off 6 sts. at the beginning of the next 2 rows, then knit 2 together each end of needle every other row 6 times, having 94 sts. on the needle. Knit until armholes measure 6 inches on the straight, then shape for the shoulders by casting off 6 sts. at the beginning of the next 10 rows, leaving 34 sts. in the centre for the back of the neck. Cast off remaining sts.

LEFT FRONT.

Begin at lower edge and cast on 66 sts. Knit into back of cast on sts. Knit in garter st. until work measures 6 inches from the beginning. Then knit 2 together at side edge every 6th row until there are 60 sts. on the needle.

Knit until work measures 16 inches from the beginning, and then shape for the armhole on the same edge as you decreased lower down, by casting off 6 sts. at the beginning of the row. Then k. 2 together at the same edge every alternate row 4 times, leaving 50 sts. on the needle.

When armhole measures 8 inches cast off 20 sts. at neck edge and knit to armhole, now shape shoulder by casting off 6 sts. at armhole edge every alternate row 5 times.

RIGHT FRONT.

Is worked exactly as the Left Front, but making the shaping on opposite sides.

SLEEVE.

With the navy wool cast on 84 sts. Knit into back of cast on sts., and work in garter st. for 13 inches. Join saxe wool and knit for 13 inches. (This forms the turned-back cuff). Now increase 1 st. each end of the needle every 7th row until there are 94 sts. on the needle. When sleeve measures 10 inches from beginning, shape top by knitting 2 sts. together each end of the needle every row until 30 sts. remain. Cast off loosely. Make another sleeve the same.

BANDS FOR THE FRONTS.

With navy wool, cast on 10 sts. and knit in garter st. for 24 inches. Knit another band the same width to go across the front revers and back of neck.

Belt: With saxe wool cast on 14 sts. and knit in garter st. until belt is long enough for waist. Cast off.

TO MAKE UP.

Press all work with a warm iron lightly, and do not stretch. Sew up shoulder, underarm, and sleeve seams. Sew in sleeves, putting seam to seam. Turn back 2 inches for cuffs. Sew on front bands, and band across back. Sew a few press studs to front. Sew buckle to belt.

ISN'T the attractive, this blue-jacket girl? Ready for a day on the ocean waves, even to her fascinating tailor hat. Simple, expert directions, given on this page, may be followed with ease, so knit yourself a new departure in smart simplicity. Saxe blue and navy crepe wool are the materials used, but any other two colors may be used.

Worked in garter stitch, plain knitting every row, this trim jacket will appeal to novices and experienced knitters alike.

DRESS . . . *By Day and Night*

HAVE you ever noticed how simply women of discerning taste dress by day? Even the film stars avoid all flutter and fuss in favor of clear-cut line and close attention to smart detail.

And because of this daytime simplicity they are all the more glamorous when at night they emerge in frocks of diaphanous beauty or glittering wonder.

The utter simplicity of the tailored jacket featured above will therefore please the discerning girl and woman.

That is one of the main reasons why we selected the garment above. Another, of course, is its economy, and, still another, its ease of making—as we have already pointed out to you.

Shampoo Sunshine into your hair

with

EVAN WILLIAMS SHAMPOOS

There's a Grade for Every shade

CAMOMILE for FAIR Hair — ORDINARY for DARK Hair

OTHER EVAN WILLIAMS PREPARATIONS — GRADUATED, gives warm, reddish tints to brown and auburn hair. HENNA and CAMOMILE, to revive fair hair. TUNISIAN recolours brown hair that is partly grey. SPECIAL TUNISIAN restores grey hair to natural colour. BLEU SHAMPOO for white and grey hair. DRY SHAMPOO (no water). LOTOZONE, delightfully refreshing. COCOANUT OIL SHAMPOO for dry hair. PINE TAR, soothing for the scalp. Exquisite BRILLIANTINES for every shade give a delightful sheen.

Australian Agents, R. G. TURNLEY AND SON, Melbourne.

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STUDENT FAGGED WITH STUDY —— MASTER ADVISES HIM TO "TAKE CLEMENTS TONIC"

"I was studying for exams. and, forced to 'burn the midnight oil' somewhat, I soon began to get slight nervous troubles, while I was always more or less tired. A master advised Clements Tonic and I was surprised at the effect. It has toned me up wonderfully and I find I can work easier." — M.G.C., Auckland.

"I ADVISE all students who 'swat hard,'" adds Mr. C., "to keep a bottle of Clements Tonic handy always."

Clements Tonic is a natural and never-failing restorative in cases of overwork and over-worry. Quickly, safely, it calms frayed nerves—brings deep and restful sleep without the aid of harmful drugs and opiates. It revives failing appetites, feeds the blood and nervous systems, and, by assisting metabolism, makes your food of value to you. Sparkling, vigorous health follows naturally.

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(Original letter on file for inspection.)

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CLEMENTS TONIC
"Gives you Nerves of Steel"

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WEANING NEVER TROUBLED HIM . . .

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● Every mother should possess a copy of "My Book", an authoritative guide to successful infant feeding. Write for your copy to-day to Colman-Keen (Aust.) Ltd., G.P.O. Box 2503 MM, Sydney, N.S.W.

ROBINSON'S "PATENT" GROATS

GF. 35/1

DARE to have your own opinions about every matter of human importance, and for your sake and our sake see to it that your opinion is really based on your own thinking.—M. Preston-Stanley.

MAKE use of this short time of thy life by making it peaceable both to thyself and others. Endear thyself in all men's love whilst thou livest, to the end that when thou diest thy loss may be lamented.—Seneca.

VICTORIAN FAMILY Robinson

Continued from Page 5

JAMES ROBINSON had never heard of the theory, so popular in later times, that classed all desert islands as dangerous to morals. The tale of the one man and one woman under the palm trees had not yet invaded literature. But, if he was a visionary, he was no fool; and he conceived that there might be, in these Pacific isles, influences other than those commonly discussed at missionary meetings.

He set his teeth, and resolved to "see about it."

Meantime, one had to keep up the spirits of one's company. The ancestor would have done that—indeed, had done it, almost to excess, if one remembered rightly his reproofs to the downhearted.

"We'll be all right here," he pronounced, sticking his wet hands in his wet pockets, and working up a muscular-Christian smile. "It's not the rainy season, and there seems to be food, and by and by they'll send out a ship to look for us."

Bussacott, looking out to sea, somewhat sourly remarked: "Maybe."

"Why not?" indignantly demanded Robinson.

"Spoke no ships this last three weeks," the mate explained. "And nothing to tell where we were when we struck, not unless we'd had a patent machine to shoot telegraphs through the air." He grinned at this flight of fancy. "They won't know where to look when the lookin' begins, and that won't be for some time. Best settle down and be as comfortable as we can."

"Comfortable—without so much as a carpet bag among us!" said Black bitterly.

The mate took one hand out of his pocket, pointed to something, and put it back again.

Eleanor uttered a shrill, fashionable scream. "Eee!" she cried. "Wreckage!"

Things were beginning already, to drift in from the sunken ship. Barrels beyond the reef, were floating and bobbing. Cases sailed along. Hencoops, gratings, pieces of furniture—it was as if a general store had broken up, and was vomiting its contents. The Philippi, unlike ships of a later day, was fitted almost exclusively with wood; her cargo had been stowed in floatable boxes and barrels, and she had gone down in a calm and comparatively shallow sea. Conditions, therefore, were ideal for the development of the wrecker spirit that lives in every man.

The tide was fast making; through the one opening of the reef began to sweep a current that would have turned back a full-powered launch. And as if the tide had been hired to do the work, and do it accurately, the flotsam and jetsam of the Philippi began to arrive in streams, in waggon-loads, upon the beach.

Tiredness was forgotten; forgotten the memory of the awful night through which the refugees had passed, the vision of shipmates helplessly drowning, of sharks that hovered like wolves about the wreck, seizing and tearing. Everyone saw treasure, and everyone seized it. The excited shrieks of the women mingled with shouts from the men, as they dashed together into the lagoon, ankle deep, waist deep, neck deep, each seizing the thing that he or she desired, each towing like a steam tug until the booty was landed in shallow water, and there dumped down. There was so much that they wanted! Chairs from the cabin, floating cushions and mattresses and sheets, a table or so, passengers' trunks and carpet-bags of the old-fashioned, fragile kind that floated high and safely; bales of canvas, barrels of flour, barrels of beer, huge tins of ship's biscuit, hams, sides of bacon. James Robinson's bag floated in among the rest; he recognised it, and joyfully seized upon it. Most of it was secured and landed, before the refugees suffered the unspeakable torment of seeing the rest float out again, streaming away upon the furious race that ran through the reef passage.

Adeline and Charles, side by side, had labored with the best, and it was not until the orgy of the treasure hunt had ended, and the sun, swiftly declining, warned of coming night, that it occurred to Adeline she had been indulging in the accursed sport of mixed bathing. Eleanor had thought of that some time ago, and retired—after she had secured the basket-trunks of two dead passengers, and the dressing-case of another. Lady Gilliland, never at a loss, had gone into the neighboring forest, removed her swelling crinoline and her long, wet silk dress, and belted a mackintosh tightly about her waist. "Some of the very best people," she said loudly, "go fishing the Scotch rivers, dressed like this." And as nobody but Lady Gilliland herself, and Charlie, who didn't care a button if she went in as Lady Godiva, were familiar with the customs of the "best" people, the proclamation set everything right, for her.

But Addie, when she came to herself, finally emerged, feeling like a drowned rat, and a criminal rat to boot. Her father, who had been helping with the flour and hams, fixed her with a disapproving gaze. Addie's starched frock was a rag; her petticoats had wreathed themselves about her thighs; her laced and embroidered drawers flapped over ankles bare of stockings. And Charlie, in an impromptu bathing costume of open-necked shirt and trousers, rolled-up, looked less scandalous.

JAMES ROBINSON felt that the desert island influence was beginning to work already. "Go to your room, girl!" was on his lips, and he only stopped in time to remember that Addie hadn't a room—nor had anyone else.

Turning his back on the disgraceful spectacle, he told her to get herself some clothes out of the trunks; and hastened, himself, to help the other men in the task of putting up canvas shelters under the pandanus trees by the beach.

By sundown, the men had the shelters ready, and the girls, working under Lady Gilliland's determined direction, had made a fire, cooked ham on hot stones, and brewed tea from one of the cases, in an emptied biscuit tin. They had dressed themselves in the only clothes available, taken from the huge dress-baskets that held the ball frocks of an actress booked for Sydney. She was lying at the bottom of the coral seas now, and would never wear ball-dresses, or any dresses, more. And Adeline, and Eleanor, and Lady Gilliland, and Mrs. Black, in royal-blue, mauve, magenta, Irish-green, in furbelows and frills, and trailing skirts, in low necks cut from shoulder to shoulder, moved round the fire, brewing tea and cooking ham and bacon. They were not embarrassed, as their granddaughters might have been; they were not conscious of being impeded. All their lives they had gone in trailing skirts and many of them; they felt much more at home, thus dressed, than they would have done in any attire less formal. Sporting dress had not been invented, even thought of. A lady lived in silks, fourteen yards; in lace and cambric and embroidery, twenty yards or so, invisible, but starchily rustling. "A girl," one writer had said, "ought to smell of clear starch from the day she comes out until her marriage." What happened after that was apparently of no importance; marriage, one was allowed to suppose, took the starch out of her. . . .

Please turn to Page 49

??????

I have a heavy problem
Weighing on my mind.
An answer to this problem
Is very hard to find.

The question which besets me
As I tread life's thorny path,
Is how to use my bath salts
In a shower-bath.
—M. Spencer.

??????

HOST HOLBROOK says: For the unexpected guest a few tasty sandwiches can be quickly made with Holbrooks' Anchovy Paste.***

NEW PLASMIC

America's Most Talked Of Skin Preparation.

"ACTUAL PHOTO. (Untouched). Mrs. Helen Sagemore, Bondi Road, Age 57, Taken on July 12th, 1934.

ACTUAL PHOTO. (Untouched). Mrs. Helen Sagemore, Bondi Road, taken on July 22nd, 1934, after 4 applications of New Plasmic.

Absolutely removes almost instantaneously all WRINKLES, LINES, BLEMISHES of the Skin, Pimples, etc., developed by Old Age or Other Causes.

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The Very First Treatment produces Unbelievable Results. Restores permanently to old or middle age the skin and complexion of youth.

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THE LATEST AND MOST GENUINE DISCOVERY. TRY IT—YOU WILL BE AMAZED.

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Letters insufficiently stamped cannot be accepted.

PRIZE CONTRIBUTIONS

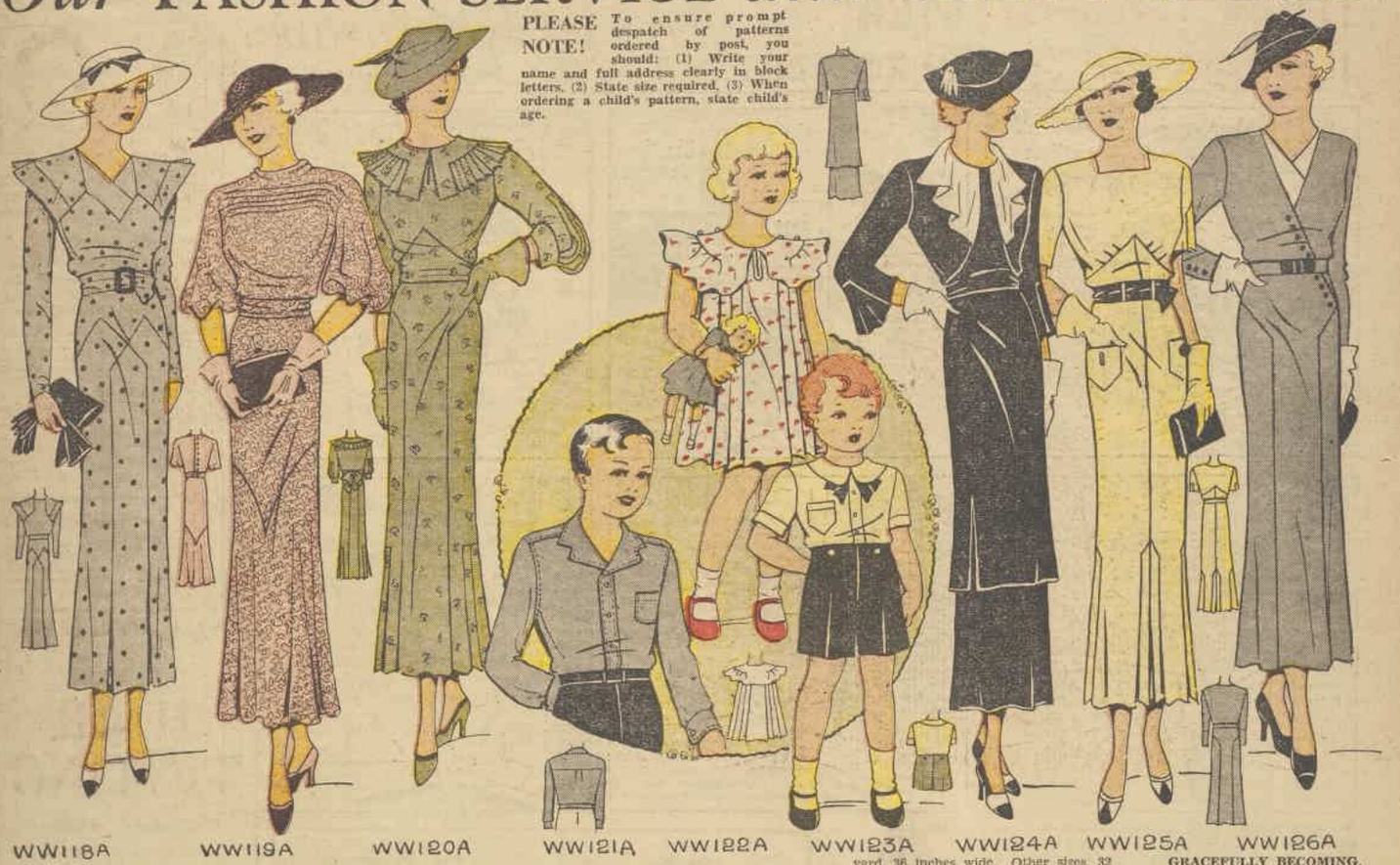
Readers need not claim for prizes unless they do not receive payment within one month of date of publication. In the event of similar contributions, payment goes to the first received.

PATTERNS

See special notice on the pattern page.

Our FASHION SERVICE *and* FREE PATTERN

PLEASE NOTE! To ensure prompt despatch of patterns ordered by post, you should: (1) Write your name and full address clearly in block letters. (2) State size required. (3) When ordering a child's pattern, state child's age.



WW118A WW119A WW120A WW121A WW122A WW123A WW124A WW125A WW126A

ADVANCED AUTUMN MODEL.

WW118A.—Choose this style as an advanced autumn model. It has long sleeves and a contrast vest. Skirt features a shaped panel back and front, with inverted pleats at the seams. Material for 36-inch bust: 4 yards, 36 inches wide. Contrast: ¼ yard, 30 inches wide. Other sizes, 32 to 40 inches. **PAPER PATTERN, 1/1.**

MAKE IT FOR CHIC.

WW119A.—A clever use is made of small, inverted tucks on this magyar blouse. Sleeves terminate at the elbow. Skirt has a low flare, cut with a point, back and front. Material for 36-inch bust: 4¼ yards, 36 inches wide. Other sizes, 32 to 40 inches. **PAPER PATTERN, 1/1.**

THE FEMININE TOUCH.

WW120A.—The feminine touch of this frock is pronounced in the sleeve and collar trimming. Skirt is shaped over the hips and pleated sections are inserted at the base. Material for 36-inch bust: 4¾ yards, 36 inches wide. Other sizes, 32 to 40 inches. **PAPER PATTERN, 1/1.**

AN "EVERYDAY" SHIRT.

WW121A.—Replenish his wardrobe before the winter sets in, and make his everyday shirts from this design. It is quite the newest cut. Pattern provided in sizes 6 to 14 years. Material for 14 years: 2¼ yards, 36 inches wide. **PAPER PATTERN, 10d.**

VERY CHARMING.

WW122A.—If you want an easy frock to make for the small girl choose this model. Pleats extend down front and back from neck. The new style cape collar gives extra charm to frock. Pattern for 2 and 4 years. Material: 1¾ yards, 36 inches wide. **PAPER PATTERN, 10d.**

MANLY—AND SIMPLE.

WW123A.—A popular style for a small boy's suit. Shirt has elbow sleeves and fastens down the front under the box pleat. Pants button on to the shirt. Pattern for 2 and 4 years. Material: Shirt, 1 yard, 36 inches wide. Pants, ¾ yard, 36 inches wide. **PAPER PATTERN, 10d.**

POPULAR TUNIC STYLE.

WW124A.—The tunic frock promises to be one of the most favored modes for the coming season. This model has a contrast collar providing a flared effect. Material for 36-inch bust: 5 yards, 36 inches wide. Contrast: ¼ yard, 36 inches wide. Other sizes, 32 to 40 inches. **PAPER PATTERN, 1/1.**

IN PLAIN LINEN.

WW125A.—A runabout frock in plain linen, featuring a square neck. Skirt has a seam back and front; the low pleats are inserted at each seam. Material for 36-inch bust: 4 yards, 36 inches wide. Other sizes, 32 to 40 inches. **PAPER PATTERN, 1/1.**

GRACEFULLY BECOMING.

WW126A.—A practical frock for a matron. It has crossover fastening, and may be worn with or without a belt. Contrast fabric is used for the vest. Sleeves are tight fitting with wide, shaped cuffs. Material for 36-inch bust: 3¾ yards, 36 inches wide. Contrast: ¼ yard, 30 inches wide. Other sizes, 34 to 48 inches. **PAPER PATTERN, 1/1.**

FREE PATTERN COUPON

This coupon is available for one month from the date of issue only. To obtain a free pattern of the garment illustrated, fill in the coupon and post it, WITH 1d. STAMP, to cover the cost of postage, clearly marking on the envelope "Pattern Dept.," to any of the following addresses. A PENNY STAMP MUST BE FORWARDED FOR EACH COUPON ENCLOSED. A charge of threepence will be made for Free Patterns over one month old.—

SYDNEY—The Australian Women's Weekly, Box 4153X, G.P.O., Sydney.
BRISBANE—The Australian Women's Weekly, Box 869F, G.P.O., Brisbane.
MELBOURNE — The Australian Women's Weekly, Box 185, G.P.O., Melbourne.
ADELAIDE—The Australian Women's Weekly, Box 288A, G.P.O., Adelaide.
NEWCASTLE — The Australian Women's Weekly, Box 41, G.P.O., Newcastle.

Should you desire to call for the pattern, please see addresses of our various offices, which will be found on another page.

PLEASE PRINT NAME AND ADDRESS IN BLOCK LETTERS.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

State .....

Pattern Coupon, 23/2/'35.

A FAVORITE MODEL

THIS week we give the pattern for a smart tunic frock, in a particularly becoming style (WW124A). Note the chic effect the slit in the tunic gives to the frock.

Our Free Pattern

THIS week's free pattern will be much appreciated by the growing schoolgirl. It is a straight-down model with a back or front panel, continuing into the armhole.

The sleeves are gathered into narrow wristbands.

Pattern is for a girl of 14 years.

Material: 2½ yards, 36 inches wide.

Contrast: ½ yard, 36 inches wide.

Turnings must be allowed when cutting out.

No Diet—No Exercises

Here is Nature's own way of reducing. Just a regular dose of Schumann's Mineral Spring Salts and after one week you will be simply amazed. One of the features of Schumann's Salts is that while making you slim they also provide a health tonic to the whole system. Internal as well as external accumulations of fat vanish and, together with slimness, come Stronger Nerves, Better Digestion, Better Breathing, More Energy, and in the case of women, added Beauty and frequently a Clearer and more Beautiful Skin.

Slimming Treatise FREE

If you send in the top of a Schumann's Salts Carton to the address printed thereon you will in return receive a Modern Treatise on Slimming entitled:

"REDUCE EACH DAY THE SCHUMANN WAY."

The Schumann Slimming Treatise deals very thoroughly and scientifically with the art of Slimming naturally though eating heartily. Send the top of your Schumann Carton to-day.

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MINERAL SPRING
Salts
"Purifies but does not Purge"

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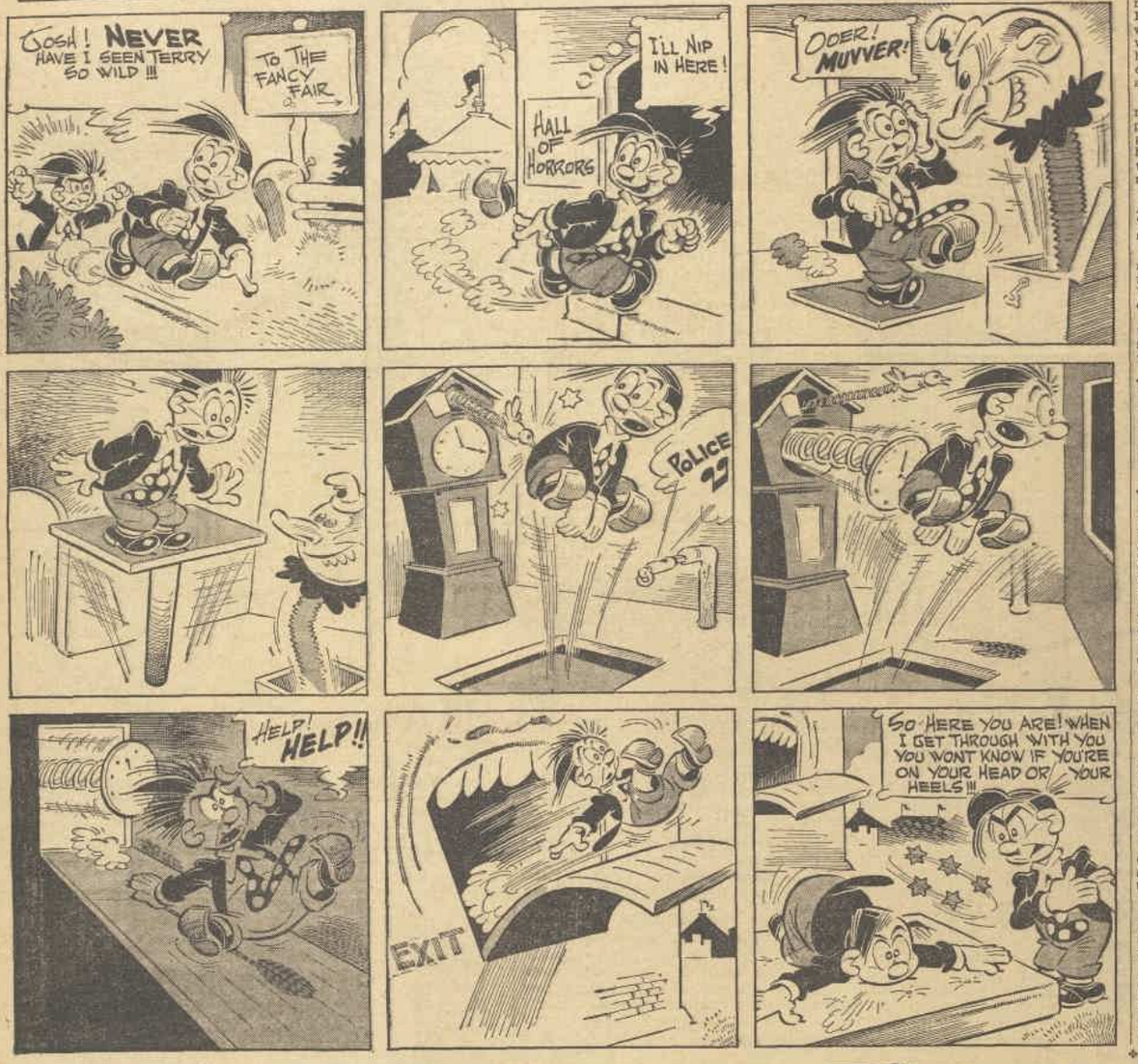
TERRY and TEDDY THE TERRIBLE TWINS

By HARRY EYRE JR.



FRED IN THE LAND OF MAGIC

By C. Marshall

ONE bright Saturday morning found Fred and Wunderlust bathing in the surf. They were at a little beach just about ten miles from Mushroom Grove. How glorious it was in the water, and neither of them wanted to leave, but as the hands of the clock moved to eleven, Wunderlust waded out and motioned to Fred to follow.

This Fred did and, briskly rubbing himself down, prepared to go. As he was just getting into Wunderlust's car, his eye fell upon a little boy who lived quite close to Mushroom Grove.

"Going home, Max?" he cried. As the little fellow answered "yes," they all got in the car and started for home.

Now the drive home was not a good one. Steep, precipitous mountains were on all sides, so Wunderlust had to concentrate on the road all the time.

They drove for five miles, and then, suddenly, a little black Scotch terrier seemed to come from nowhere and stand in the middle of the road. To avoid running into the little dog, Wunderlust put on his brakes. But they would not act, and the car whizzed right off the road, fell for a few yards, and stopped still right in the top of a tree.

"Don't move," cried Wunderlust to Fred, "we'll be killed if we attempt to get out of the car. Just look at that sheer drop. My word, we were lucky we didn't go right over."

"I can't look," cried Fred, who had the small boy's head on his shoulder. The little boy was apparently unconscious.

What was that?

Voices could be heard some yards away, and Wunderlust coo-eed. Instantly a man and boy came on the scene. When they saw what was the matter they ran to the road and hailed a passing car.

And soon the occupants of the car were assisting Wunderlust and his two companions out of the wrecked car.

It certainly was not an easy job getting Wunderlust, Fred and the little boy down from the tree, but eventually it was managed.

And then the three were taken home, all glad they were not seriously hurt, but all suffering from shock and a few minor scratches. Of course, the car was a total wreck.

GOOD WORK

PRIZE of 5/- for the best letter goes to BETH RAFFERTY, Box 61, Moree, N.S.W.

(Address all letters and contributions to Jill, Box 1551K, G.P.O., Sydney).

Jill's Letter

MY Dear Jacks and Jills,—

I suppose you all know that the commonest name in this country is John Smith—a good, honest, easy-sounding name.

But just you see how different it is in other languages.

Take the Russian rendering for example. In this language it becomes Jonieff Smittowski. The French make it Jean Smeets; the Italians, Giovanni Smithi; the Dutch, Hans Schmidt. A Greek would call it Ion Smikton; a Chinese, Jahon Schimmit; an Icelander, Jahne Smithson; a Mexican, Jontii F'Smitri. The Welsh would make it similar to the Chinese rendering, Jihon Schmidd; in Polish it would be written Ivan Schmittiwski; in Turkish, Yoe Seef; in Spanish, Juan Smithus.

Well, Jacks and Jills, after all, the English is the easiest, isn't it? Though it may not be quite so picturesque.

Good-bye until next week,

Cheerily Yours, JILL.

MY OLD TEDDY BEAR

By THERESE WILKINS.

OH, dear old ragged Teddy,
Your days of youth are o'er,
But still to me you're as lovely
As ever you were before.

'Tis true, that you have but one ear,
And you need a nice new eye,
But you brought me hours of cheer
And made the days slip by.

And now that I'm too old to play,
You still hold a place in my heart.
A treasured possession you'll always be—
With you I'll never part.

Prize of 5/- to THERESE WILKINS (13), Padua, 3 Acton St., Croydon, N.S.W., for this original verse.

Golden Wattle

By PEGGY BAXTER.

ONCE upon a time there lived in fairyland a pixie known as Sandy. He was a gardener at the Queen's palace. One day as he was working in the garden, the Queen came to him and said, "Sandy, I am getting married in a week's time, and my bouquet is to be wattle." Now, in those days, wattle used to be white, so imagine poor Sandy's surprise when the Queen said she must have her wattle bouquet a golden color.

Sandy walked round and round the garden, thinking of what he could do. He knew that if he didn't find the golden wattle he would be expelled from the Queen's palace. Suddenly, he got an idea. He rushed to the tool shed and found a tin of gold paint and painted all the wattle trees golden. Of course, the Queen got her golden bouquet, and she was so very pleased she made poor Sandy the head gardener.

Prize of 5/- to PEGGY BAXTER (9), 8 Victoria St., Goulburn, N.S.W., for this pretty story.

MAGIC WHIRLPOOLS.

FILL a tumbler with water, and throw some thin shavings of camphor on the surface. The shavings will instantly begin to move about, and you will find they give the appearance of a small whirlpool, the movements continuing for some time.

Now, if you dip into the water something greasy, say, the end of a pencil that has been dipped in oil, the fragments of camphor will dart to the sides of the glass, and the little whirlpool will cease.

Prize Card to RUTH RYAN, Emchrue, 26 Rosedale Avenue, Manly, N.S.W.

About Ourselves

DES BOSEL, of Maryborough (Qld.), is a member of the Maryborough Juvenile Choir; EDITH TAYLOR, of Mimosa, via Tenterfield, is a popil of the Blackfriars Correspondence School; DON THOMPSON, of Melbourne, is one of our newest members; PEGGY PURDY, of Kurri Kurri (N.S.W.), writes good verse; ETHEL CASTRAY, of Carnegie (N.S.W.), is fond of sketching; BETTY ISAACS, of North Bondi (N.S.W.), writes a good letter; JACK NEWMAN, of Albury (N.S.W.), is fond of hiking; DAPHNE RIX, of West Tamworth (N.S.W.), admires the country surrounding her home; JACK CONNELLY, of Geelong (Vic.), will be 15 years old next month; WINNIE TOWNSEND, of Bulletin Min., does good sketches.

RUTH RYAN, of Manly (N.S.W.), is fond of riddles; JACK MANNING, of Geelong (Vic.), has a lovely Alsatian puppy for his pet; CORAL CHALK, of Burnie (Tas.), hopes to be an authoress when she grows up; J. SMITH, of Rockdale (N.S.W.), writes a very interesting letter; CORAL BUCHANAN, of Beechampton (Qld.), got a fountain pen for her birthday; DOUG LAS CAMPBELL, of Griffith (N.S.W.), is fond of making lollies; DOROTHEA WALKER, of Leichhardt (N.S.W.), is thirteen years of age, and likes seeing a good picture filmed; FRANK DURANT, of Mildura (Vic.), has a toy motor car; BETH RAFFERTY, of Moree (N.S.W.), is fifteen years of age, and has just left school.

Enid Gordon, of Five Dock.

EILEEN MURRAY, of Kogarah Bay (N.S.W.), does clever sketches; ALAN GODFRAY, of Brisbane (Qld.), is nine years old next April; JUFF COUDRAY, of Bendigo (Vic.), has a nice white dog for his pet; ALISON ESTON, of Port Pirie (S.A.), is going to Adelaide next week to visit one of her sisters; FAY ROBINSON, of Childers (Qld.), learns elocution and the piano; GLADYS VAISEY, of Aberdare, is fifteen years of age, and has just left school; CECILE PALK, of Artarmon (N.S.W.), writes a very interesting letter; CECIL CUNNINGHAM, of Bundaberg (Qld.), has a dear pony for his pet; MADGE DELANEY, of Mildura (Vic.), is fond of reading and writing; MARY WORTHINGTON, of Gladesville (N.S.W.), is fourteen years of age.

FOR FUN & FANCY

A lady bought a pair of stockings at a drapery store. The next day she came back to the store and said to the assistant: "These stockings I bought yesterday had a ladder in them."

"Well," answered the assistant, "what do you expect for 1/6, a marble staircase?"

Prize Card to JACK NORRIS, 7 Hunter St., Georgetown, Waratah, N.S.W.

"Dad, do schoolteachers get paid?"

"Of course they do, sonny," replied father.

"Then it isn't fair," burst out the small boy indignantly. "Why should the teachers get paid when us kids do all the work?"

Prize Card to CHARLIE OSBORNE, 23 Cochrane St., Paddington, Brisbane.

A Scotchman, an Englishman and an Irishman were arguing among themselves as to which trains were the fastest. "Well," said the Scotchman, "I was in the 'Flying Scotchman' once, and the telegraph poles looked like a fence, so fast we went."

"That's nothing," said the Englishman. "I was in one of our trains once, and the telegraph poles looked like graveyards so close together did they look. What about you, Pat?"

"Well," cried Pat. "I was in an engine of ours once, and as we went by we came upon a carrot field, a turnip field, a parsley field, and, lastly, a pond, and begorra it looked just like vegetable soup."

Prize Card to BETTY LEE, 13 Ocean St., Bondi, N.S.W.

Small Boy (at boat race, pointing at a cox): That man at the back of that boat does not seem to be doing much.

Chum: Perhaps he's a stowaway.

Prize Card to MARTIN CONNOR, Otterburn.

Which land is best for babies?—Lapland.

Why is a boy with a sore throat like a young colt?—Because he is a little hoarse (horse).

If you were facing the North Pole, what would you have on your right hand?—Four fingers and a thumb.

What kind of paper is most like a sneeze?—Tissue paper.

Prize Card to KATH ASHTON, Everies, 4 Carrawa St., Caulfield, Vic.

Teacher: Johnny, do you know who put this clue on my chair?

Johnny: No, sir. I gave my word of honor I would not tell on Billie Smith.

Prize Card to NOEL HEWIT, Irela, 18 Arthur St., Forest Lodge.

NURSERY TALES. Prize of 5/- to MARJORIE STONEHAM, on Victoria St., Waverley, N.S.W., for this clever sketch.

Mother: Oh, Billy, you naughty boy! You have been fighting again and lost two teeth.

Billy: No, I haven't, mother, 'cause they are in my pocket."

Prize Card to GORDON BOW, Farm 211, Yenda, N.S.W.

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VICTORIAN *Family* ROBINSON

Continued from Page 46

THE men came to supper. (But Lady Gilliland called it "dinner" and none dared gainsay her, since she knew all the best people.) They walked in a sort of procession down the already trodden track through the long grass; James Robinson first, the mate next, Charlie Chaine, Gerald Black. They had all tidied up behind a big rock; it was the most orderly of shipwrecks, and one doubted not, would continue to be so, under the auspices of Lady Gilliland and James. Clothes from floating trunks had been seized, dried, and put on. Hair and whiskers had been combed and even pomaded. Charlie's golden whiskers shone in the evening light; Gerald Black's lank hair was greased; the Reverend James had made himself look as much like Charles Kingsley as he could, and as every Anglican parson, in those days, desired to look.

And there, in the enormous loneliness of the Pacific, with the moon creeping up through the palm trees, and the reef chanting out to sea, they sat beneath coconut torches, in their silks and their fine suits, and politely made conversation.

The Reverend James was proud of those torches. Feeling that his role of the Father in the "Swiss Family" must be kept up, he had done his best to remember how people on desert islands made light. The stamps of coconut leaves, things as big as a cricket bat, came to his mind at once; candle-nuts were good also, if one could find them later on. You strung them on the midrib of the coconut leaf, lit one and let the flame burn down. He'd read it in missionary books. Never had he dreamed how useful those missionary records were to be!

If there were only a race of grateful and obedient darkies on this desert island, just like the darkies in the missionary pictures, oh, how he would have enjoyed converting, ruling, ordering them! He had always had a hankering after the mission field.

Dreaming thus, over his frizzled bacon and his tea, served romantically and uncomfortably in big clam shells, James Robinson lost sight of his surroundings; did not see that the moon, and the ringing reef, and the rebound from terror and danger to safety, were having their effect upon the other members of the little band. That—and the dresses.

For it must be remembered that a certain slight tinge of dowdiness was, in that day, considered right and proper for refined females. Subdued colors were worn, save for evening; out-of-doors visites and dolmans disguised pretty frocks; in the house, Marion and Blanche and Flora went about wearing horrible checks and relentlessly practical aprons. The "taste for finery" so constantly deprecated in novels of the time was supposed to lead straight to all kinds of moral disaster. Mrs. Wood, who numbered readers by the million, Miss Alcott, not far behind, drew all their virtuous girls hideously clothed; a heroine reformed when she tore the "killing bow" from her hair, and ripped the trimming from her polonaise; a good girl sank when she began to wear earrings, and "polished her skin" (sic) with powder.

Only the trebly, indubitably Bad wore really attractive dresses. And the little actress who lay so deep beneath the coral seas, whether she was "bad" or not, had known her woman's trade. Now, perhaps, she had revenge—if she had known it—for slights passed upon her during the voyage; for attentions grudged, small triumphs dearly bought. Eleanor and Adeline, Lady Gilliland and Mrs. Blake, were wearing her frocks and (it must be said) liking them. Instinct whispered to each one that she, in the little actress's clothing, looked better, more attractive, than ever she had looked in her life.

MINNIE BLACK, that colorless small creature, bloomed like a watered flower, above the crude flame of magenta taffetas. Eleanor's fair skin and auburn curls, set off by countless ruffllings of emerald green, caused her to look, as the mate said to himself, like the sun coming up out of the sea at the end of the morning watch. Lady Gilliland had never looked so much the "lady" and so completely the woman, as she did in the dead actress's white lace over Mazarin blue, and Addie——

Addie, outrageously frocked in shot silk of daffodil and scarlet, colors which by the canons of the time should have been reserved, if anyone wore them, for brunettes alone—Addie, fair-haired and blue-grey-eyed, bloomed for the first time in all the beauty that Nature had meant for her, and propriety, hitherto, denied. She was what Wendell Holmes has called a "positive blonde" — an amber girl, not a girl of uninteresting wheat-color. Gay as a flower and vital as a flame, she would carry gorgeous clothing, could have carried jewels, too, if she had had them. The white book muslins, the insipid milk-blue "mulls" of her usual toilettes had veiled, kept down something that now bloomed out in full force. At the end of the rude table she sat like a queen, and Charlie, and the mate, and even Black, paid homage with their eyes.

The mate, indeed, glancing away from Eleanor, saw that Minnie Black had become suddenly pleasant to the eyes; told himself that shipwrecks seemed to do good to some of those little "petticuts," and wondered if he couldn't catch her away from her husband. But, after all, Eleanor was the one!

And Black, who hadn't noticed Minnie's blooming, saw the mate's glance, and frowned upon his wife. And at the last, James Robinson, waking from his dream of grateful blacks, let his eyes rest upon Lady Gilliland, and saw, with a shock that almost threw him from his log seat to the ground, that Margaret (he had long known it to be her name) was beautiful.

Indeed, the little actress, dead among the corals, had known her woman's trade.

It had always been James Robinson's instinct to flee the beautiful, mistrust the pleasant and delightful. Acting on impulse, he rose to his feet, and pitching his voice to the correct clerical tone, said: "We will now have family prayers, and will together thank Heaven for our deliverance."

They had prayers, kneeling on the damp grass, and if Charlie paid delighted attention to Adeline's outstretched heels and ankles, rather than to the prayer, and if the mate and Black yawned undisguisedly, and Margaret Gilliland knelt very upright with a Vice-Regal smile on her face, patronising the Almighty, at least the Reverend James was in earnest, and no one was the worse.

Please turn to Page 50

Our Diet Hint

The Vitamins

By R. E. FIGGIS,
Hon. Dietitian to the New Health Society.

WE are getting used to them now and, although our grandmothers never heard of them, they had them, possibly they used more of them than we do. What are they? some may ask. They are tiny invisible substances in foods without which it is impossible to have good health. Even a rat can't live without vitamins.

They used at first to be called "accessory factors." Now we know them to be essential factors, and a very important part of the duties of the cook or housewife to-day is to see that the food she provides for her family (including herself) is not deficient in vitamins. If it is deficient in them then what are known as deficiency diseases will arise.

Happily there are plenty of vitamin-rich foods at hand, and no one should suffer from a shortage of any of them. The A B C of foods must include vitamins A and B, and C and D. We need them all.

"I HAVE THREE VERY PRACTICAL REASONS."

1. ARNOTT'S FAMOUS SHREDDED WHEATMEAL BISCUITS are extremely easy to digest.

2. ARNOTT'S FAMOUS SHREDDED WHEATMEAL BISCUITS supply very valuable food elements and they contain all the precious vitamins and proteins from the whole wheat grain.

3. ARNOTT'S FAMOUS SHREDDED WHEATMEAL BISCUITS are delicious and exceedingly popular; try them spread with butter and creamy candied honey, with butter and cheese, or jam.

ALWAYS ASK FOR ARNOTT'S AND BE SURE YOU GET THEM

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Men say so!

Men *are* attracted by lips that have the natural color of radiant health—but painted lips are repulsive. Don't you risk that painted look! Simply use Tangee—it isn't paint! This unusual lipstick contains a color-change principle which enables it to intensify *your* natural color. Permanent! Its cream base soothes and softens.

Also Tangee Theatrical, a deeper shade.

Tangee Cosmetic beautifies eyelashes and eyebrows. Waterproof.

UNTOUCHED—Lips left untouched are apt to have a faded look, make the face seem older.

PAINTED—Don't risk that painted look. It's convincing and men don't like it.

TANGEE—Intensifies natural color, restores youthful appeal, and ends that painted look.

World's Most Famous Lipstick

TANGEE

ENDS THAT PAINTED LOOK

R. G. TURNLEY & SON, 266 Flinders Street, Melbourne.

FORGET THE WORRY OF SKIN BLEMISHES

CLEAR UP
BLOTCHES
BLACKHEADS
ROUGHNESS

Use THE NEW Rexona MEDICATED SOAP Containing CADYL

9d. PER TABLET IN CITY AND SUBURBS

REXONA PROPRIETARY LIMITED

RECOVERED FROM ANAEMIA

But Had Almost Given Up Hope

"I feel it is my duty to tell others of the wonderful effect Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have had upon me," states Mrs. H.B., of North Fitzroy, Melbourne. "For over 2 years I have been suffering from anaemia and although I have tried many treatments, none did me any good until I took these splendid pills. My nerves were in a very bad state; twitchings all over my body and I could not sleep at night. My appetite went, and then followed terrible weakness until I was practically helpless. I could not walk a short distance or stand a few minutes without having to lie down and rest.

"I had almost given up hope of recovering my health and strength when I read about Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and I decided to give them a trial. It was not long before I gained strength and lost the weakness. As I persevered with these pills, my appetite returned and I was able to walk again. My nerves are well and I can now sleep all through the night. I am doing my housework again, and all my friends say my recovery is wonderful and I have not looked so well for years."

All suffering, tired-out women and pale, anaemic girls should take Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Get a 3/- bottle to-day at chemists and stores.***

VICTORIAN FAMILY *Robinson*

Continued from Page 49

IN their rough beds, under the stretched canvas, some of the castaways thought long before they fell asleep. What Adeline and Charlie thought, and how, in the phrase of their day, they "sighed," no one needs to be told, who in his or her time has watered a hot pillow with useless tears. Minnie Black felt pleasantly excited; Gerald had noticed her so far as to be jealous of her, an almost unprecedented attention. Eleanor, whose mind ran on the shipwreck, was restless and troubled; haunted by regret, half personal, for the many "nice gentlemen" who were either tossing the sea in boats, or lying beneath. "There are not many here," she, somewhat ashamedly, thought. James Robinson, packed close with the other men, before he slept, said to himself that the island was fair as the Garden of Eden, and that there seemed no snake in it; but he could have wished—he could, indeed—for even a few real South Sea natives in need of conversion.

The sea rang on the reef, and flying-foxes, black against the moon, went chattering and crying down the wind. There was no other sound upon the desert isle; nothing to tell James Robinson and James Robinson's daughter that their wishes had been heard, and were about to be granted, with a fullness of which they had not even dreamed.

CHAPTER 4.

SOONER than any one of them could have believed, the castaways settled down into routine. On the first day the island was thoroughly explored by separate parties under the direction of James Robinson, who saw to it that Charlie was not in Adeline's party, and that Lady Gilliland was in his own. Lady Gilliland, he told himself, had the most practical head in all the crowd; together, they could rule this little commonwealth for its own benefit, and they would—or know the reason why.

Sir Thomas Gilliland, the Vicar thought, was an extremely lucky man. With Margaret Gilliland by his side, the governing of Australia would be easy. James could have figured himself beside her, ruling Australia, all in the purest way, and for its own good, putting down the abuses and extravagances of the goldfields, tempering the arrogance of the squatters, doing rescue work among the convicts, actual and former, who still inhabited that unlucky continent in thousands, although deportation years ago had ceased.

It was not in Robinson's knowledge that ex-convicts and wealthy squatters were often one and the same. Nor yet that he and the egregious Charlie, to make a parallel case, were brothers under their skins. Robinson belonged to a generation that felt about ten times as much and as often as it thought; that took its feelings as inspired guides—and, on the whole, did not so badly by the process. Once in a way, however, the oil-lamp of feeling failed them, led them into strange bogs and quandaries—even as the electric torch of pure intellect may fail a latter-day Georgian, run its battery out, and land him in the divorce court—or in the soup. . . .

James Robinson, with Lady Gilliland, took the northern beach and the land behind it. Adeline and Black took the eastern. Charlie Chaine and Mrs. Black, the west, leaving Eleanor and Buxacott to explore the remaining quarter. At noon, the various parties were to meet upon the southern beach, where they had landed from the wreck. It was all excellently planned and settled with the cordial help of Lady Gilliland, who didn't at all approve of married men running away from their wives to join charming girls on board ship, and who was always serenely and happily sure that her own view of any conceivable problem was the right one.

(Do you know Babs Gilliland, whose pictures appear so often in the "Tatler" and the "Sketch," chatting with A Friend, on the lawn at Ascot, making the fifteenth "counting from the left" in a country-house photograph, but oftenest taken holding a strict military pose, in her Guides coat and belt and hat, somewhere in Hoxton or Rotherhithe? Babs, facing into the fatal thirties, Babs, who hasn't "gone off like hot cakes," as Mother and Grandmother, of course, did, but who has, at least, some fun that they hadn't. In an impossible vision, I see Lady Gilliland doing social work, war work, Guide work, especially Guide work of many kinds, guiding them hard, or knowing the reason why, and loving it. And the dream fades, and I know that she, and her daughter-who-was-to-be, never tasted these joys. And I am not so sorry after all for Babs, her grandmother-over-again.)

It was all excellently arranged. Only, the Vicar and his coadjutor did not calculate on the insane jealousy of the athlete Black, that least uxorious of men. They could not have foreseen that Black, seeing his wife "take the high road" with Charlie, while he was compelled to "take the low road" with Adeline, would scamper over the ground that he had to survey, at a disgraceful pace, looking neither to the right nor to the left, hurry the entirely willing Adeline hotfoot through a palm grove, through a copse of huge bananas, down a hill and along a short cut, and, pantingly, rejoin Charles and Minnie Black on the west.

Minnie had been bored to death by Charles, who was civil and nothing more, but being a conscientious little creature, she had made notes in her head, and greeted the others with: "Oh, Gerald, there's real breadfruit on this side, things as big as melons; hanging on trees; won't it be lovely for tea?" The rest of her speech faded out; no one was listening to her. Black, rudely planting himself in front of Charlie, demanded to know if he'd quite done with his wife, and Charlie asked, with courtesy, and a chilly smile, whether Adeline would not join him in a walk, now that they had happened to meet.

Adeline saw, with delight, that he was furious. About Black's fury she cared not a jot.

In another moment, Black had walked his wife away, holding her elbow, as if he had been a policeman, and she a delinquent hawker, and Adeline, with Charlie, was walking the banana grove alone.

All her life she was to remember that banana grove, and that day. It was the first time that she had ever been really alone with the man she loved; backstairs seances, kisses snatched in conservatories, with somebody just round the corner, did not mean real solitude. But this——!

The bananas towered ten, fifteen feet above, shutting out the sun, straining it through silk of emerald; it was as if one walked in green ocean light, among enormous weed-beds at the bottom of the sea. Incredible flowers dangled in the green; blossoms as big as a giant's fist, purple, sheathed in scarlet. From the ends of the young fruits they hung, and the fruits were everywhere, food by the hundredweight; and the air was full of rich scents, spices, perfume of unseen blossoms in the surrounding bush; full of butterflies, too, blue, gold and green, and dragonflies colored like bright gems. When Charlie and Adeline stood still, they could hear, away in the wood, the contented love-sobbing of pigeons, the bizarre call of parrots, these alone breaking the silence, the solitude, for which they had longed, as desert travellers thirsting long for water.

They stood for a little space delighting in it all. Then, with a sigh, they turned to one another, and in a moment were in each other's arms.

It was Charlie who drew back first; Charlie, mad for the girl, but holding himself back, he could hardly have told you why. He had never been called clever, but he knew when a fellow was a cad and when he wasn't, and he didn't intend to be a cad where Addie was concerned. An unmarried girl was a lily in the time and the class to which they belonged. Perhaps it was class feeling, the solidarity of his order, that held him back. True, he had asked Addie to run away with him, but that was another thing. If they'd run for Australia together, she would have been, in a sort of way, his wife. Now—

He didn't know why; he didn't know how long he was going to keep it up, or whether he would keep it up at all, now that they had all slipped through into a kind of Looking-Glass Land, a sort of fourth-dimensional place where nothing, surely, could be the same—but, for the time, he respected Addie. It was he who loosened her clinging arms from about his neck, and gently put her a little away, while he ached to draw her closer, kiss her till she could not think. He'd kissed her quite enough as it was. . . .

Adeline, shining like a star, stood with her hands on his shoulders, and said only: "Oh, Charlie!" Now that he came to think of it, most of her conversations with him had been made up of that exclamation, and others: "Don't, Charlie!", "Dear Charlie!" and the rest. Being of simple and direct nature, he had not found her at all monotonous.

But now he felt that something more was necessary. He began his explanations.

"I ought to apologise. I—I ought to be shot. Like a dog," he elaborated, taking pleasure in his own abasement.

"Nobody shoots dogs," Addie simply said. "Anyhow, on purpose." She could recall occasions when the setters of a neighboring squire had suffered by reason of the Reverend James' poor marksmanship.

"Well, like—like anything." She had spoiled the simile, but he went on: "You see, I did tell your father that we wouldn't meet again, and all that. And I meant it, upon my soul I did. But when I saw the name of the steamboat in the paper, going to sail on Monday the twenty-fifth, that got me somehow. It was like being condemned to death, you know, and not knowing at first when the hanging was going to be, and then hearing that it was Monday the twenty-fifth. And then counting the days and the hours, and saying to yourself: 'After that, after that, it'll be the end, and there'll be nothing at all.' And then I bolted. Took a faster steamer, got ahead, and joined you in the third at Iquique, and not a soul knew till the other day!"

He stopped, drew a long breath, and looked about him. He wondered if it wasn't all a dream. This wonderful place, like something in stage scenery (Charlie's ideas of the beautiful in Nature were founded, like the ideas of many better men, on the splendor of drop scenes); the scents, and the sounds, and the long roll of the reef, that followed you, like the voice of conscience, through every corner of the island—he could hardly believe that he was here, and not in his great, ugly stone house in Berkshire, with the autumn sunset turning yellow outside the window-panes, and the ivy tapping in the mournful wind, and Carrie—yes, Carrie, of course!—calling at the foot of the stairs: "Charles, Charles! Where has the master got to, do you know?"

This was where the master had got to, at the end of the world. This Paradise, with the angel in it—no, the angels were outside Paradise, weren't they?—well, it didn't matter; anyhow, he was here, and Adeline was with him.

"I took a steerage ticket," he was telling her.

"Yes? Yes?"

"And all the way from Iquique I was mad to come up and speak to you, but I thought the old de—hm—I thought your father would have me put in irons or something, and the gossips would have talked; so I just stayed where I was, among all the cads—and I tell you, Addie, they were uncommon low, some of them."

"Darling, how did you——"

"I could have borne being roasted alive for your sake. Of course, they got to know that I was wearing a false beard, and they guyed me about it, asked me was I an escaped murderer, or had I only robbed a bank, and that sort of tosh. Poor souls!" He paused; there was a moment's silence, in the green-lighted glade. The wind had changed; they could hear the reef tumbling and thundering, nearer, clearer, than before. Addie shivered, though the day was hot, and drew closer to her man. Both were seeing things they wished to forget; remembering what had become of the "poor souls," and a hundred others.

To be continued

BACHELOR'S PHILOSOPHY

WOMEN, says a jurist, are just as good as ever they were. And when, inquires the cynic, was that?

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SPORTSWOMEN ... *and* *Newsreel* CRITICS

The Interfering Mr. Grundy in Women's Sports

By RUTH PREDDEY

Newsreel commentators on women's sports have themselves been in the spotlight during the past week because of what has been described as "their unchivalrous and belittling remarks about the players." The subject is one of extreme interest to Australian sportsgirls.

AT a recent meeting of the Parks and Playgrounds Movement in New South Wales, Mr. D. G. Stead asked the executive committee to express its disapproval of the comments made by newsreel commentators on women's sport. He considered that many of the remarks made were unchivalrous and belittling.

Mrs. F. J. Davy, secretary of the Australian Women's Hockey Association, who has managed several hockey teams abroad, supports Mr. Stead's statements.

"Women are putting good work into the organisation of good, clean, wholesome sport, and it is most disheartening to have their efforts ridiculed, and have facetious remarks made about the players when their game is shown on the screen," she says.

The sportswomen of Australia will feel very grateful towards Mr. Stead for having drawn attention to the matter of how their sports are discussed by men critics.

When portion of the last Wimbledon tennis championships was shown on the newsreel, a woman's voice was heard describing the match, and this voice proved extremely pleasing to the public.

Many years ago, in the time of our grandparents, women's entry into the arena of sport was scoffed at. Whenever they appeared with ball or racquet in hand, the populace gathered with the intention of spending a few amusing hours in watching the women make vain endeavors to play the game men played. Their efforts were generally accompanied by ribald laughter from the onlookers. The Press of the day caustically referred to the "ladies'" vain effort in trying to emulate their brothers, and hinted that their place was in the kitchen and not on the playing field.

The clown in the circus, the dame in the pantomime, in their desire to be particularly funny, would always endeavor to imitate the "lady" athlete, by having the game held up every two or three minutes while she conveniently fainted.

Mother Grundy witnessed all these games in which the women played, and held her hands up in horror and feared for the future of the coming generation.

THE years of the Great War brought about many changes. The "ladies" from the sports fields became the women who kept things going while the men were at the war. The man who had scoffed at their efforts on the sports fields, encouraged them to fulfil the roles their brother or father had been forced to vacate. The mythical fainting woman magically disappeared, and Mother Grundy gracefully retired.

At the termination of the war, sportswomen came into their own. They knew their limitations, and capabilities, and therefore framed their sporting activities accordingly.

They formed their own associations and their own constitutions, handled their own finance, and organised international and other championships. The public generously supported these ventures by their attendance, and each visit from overseas has been a huge success.

Meet Mr. Grundy

CRITICS of the type to which Mr. Stead has drawn attention are not the only difficulties that our sportswomen have met.

With the progress of women's sport there has sprung into being a Mr. Grundy. He fears not for the social transgressions of the sportswoman as his mother did before him. Our present day Mr. Grundy is jealous, selfish and blind. He cannot see that every day women are making great strides in the progress of their sport. He is jealous of their attainments, and under the guise of trying to be helpful, we find this same Mr. Grundy tenaciously holding on to office in many associations and clubs.

Several of our largest organisations in pre-war days co-opted women members. These women are now desirous of controlling their own activities, but here Mr. Grundy has a say. If women are given this power, he may lose office in the association. In fact, a woman may arise who is greater than he is. So, instead of fighting the issue on its merits, he smiles and resorts to treating women's sport with ridicule.

Australian sportsgirls are not afraid of commentators and critics, but they do ask for fair play.

MISS WEISS, one of Poland's outstanding athletes, demonstrates the art of discus-throwing, which will be a feature of the Australian athletic championships, to be held in Brisbane in April. Women athletes are now practising and training for these events.

CLIMBING the *Ladder* of TENNIS FAME

Long Distances Give Our Players Fewer Opportunities to Meet World's Best

By JOAN HARTIGAN

The disadvantages that Australian tennis players labor under as compared with those in England, United States and the Continental countries may not be generally recognised.

In this country our main competitions consist of the State and Australian Championships. These necessitate our players travelling from one State to another; in each case at least one night's train journey has to be undertaken.

OUR field of first-class players is naturally limited, consequently year after year the semi-final and final of these championships is usually contested by the same half-dozen players. Continually playing one another as they do they become so accustomed to each other's stroke production and strategy that they are in a position to anticipate returns more readily than would be the case if they had met less frequently and had a greater number of first-class players to contest against. It will readily be seen under these conditions how difficult it is for our players to reach world championship class.

With a younger player, however, the conditions are quite good inasmuch as he has quite reasonable opportunities of playing against better players than himself, thus assisting him in improving his game. Having, however, reached a certain standard, his prospects of further improving are not bright for the reason set out previously.

His standard of play, therefore, will in all probability remain stationary or even decline for the want of constant practice against players of greater skill than himself.

Few Opportunities

COMPARE the opportunities provided for our first-class players with those of other nationalities with their huge populations and the amount of competitive tennis of a high standard that is regularly provided. It will be readily seen how restricted the opportunities of our players really are.

In Continental countries, the United States, and Great Britain, competitions in which most of the champions are engaged take place at regular intervals throughout the year. The British players, after competing in the various competitions in their own country, have no great distance to travel to the Continent, where they have the opportunity of participating in the French, German, Italian, and other championship events; again it is no great distance to the United States, where they can take part in the championship events in that country.

In all these events they meet high-class players. Even in the preliminary rounds players of a fairly high standard take part and no doubt these matches provide quite a variety of play.

It needs very little reflection, therefore, to realise that under conditions such as these, a player who has the ability will rapidly improve his game. It is not too much to say that in every match he adds to his experience, and this should, with practice, greatly improve his stroke production.

Air Transport

DISTANCE, in these days of modern transport, presents no obstacles to players resident in these countries. Aeroplane services running a regular time-table provide particularly rapid and comfortable means of transport. A four hundred or five hundred miles journey would be covered in something like five or six hours' travelling time. To those who are not air-minded, luxurious fast mammoth liners are almost commonplace. The saving in travelling time compared to a few years ago provides opportunities to an additional number of players to whom time is of much moment.

With the exception of our representatives in the Davis Cup team or an individual who may be able to make a private trip to the world centres to take part in tennis, none of our leading players have the opportunity, except at rare intervals when international players visit Australia, of competing against any of the high-class representatives from other countries.

Our distance from world centres is, therefore, a matter of considerable disability to our representative players, because it will be readily admitted that only by continually playing against better players than ourselves are we likely to improve our standard of play. By not having these opportunities we labor under a considerable handicap; for this reason the winning of a world's championship by one of our players or the annexing of the Davis Cup coveted trophy can only be regarded as a remarkable achievement. Still, we have accomplished both these feats and, personally, I am optimistic enough to believe that it can be done again.

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EVENSONG

— By —

BEVERLEY NICHOLS

Complete Book-length Novel

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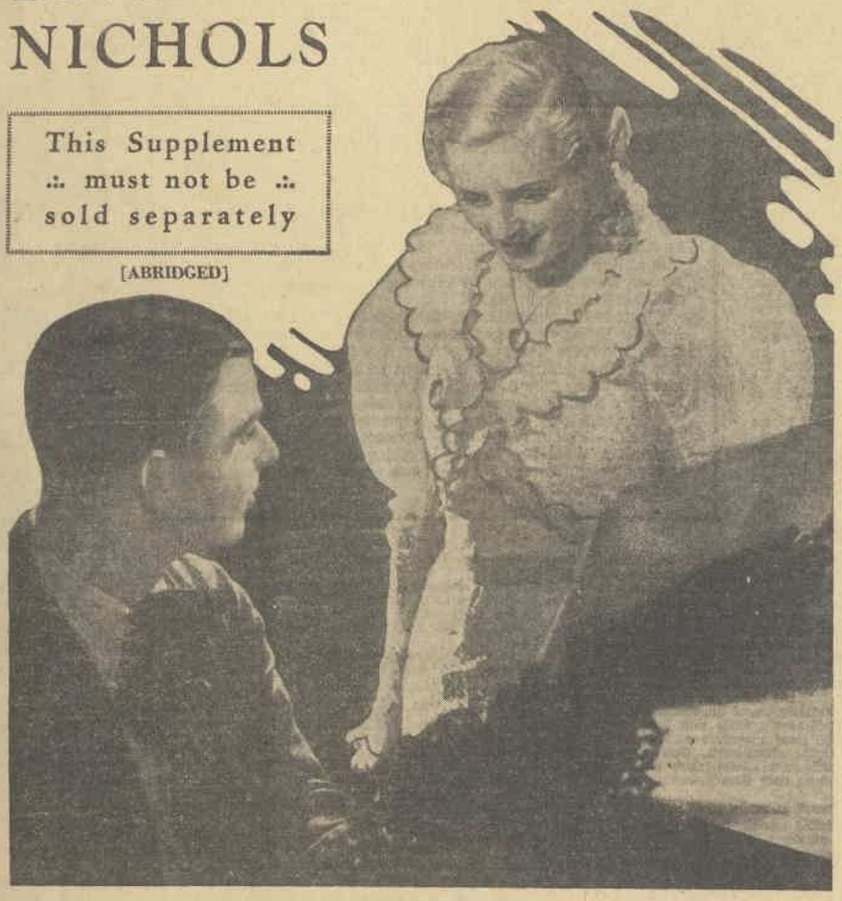

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EVENSONG

By BEVERLEY NICHOLS

PART 1.

THE SINGER.

CHAPTER 1.

IS there anything in the paper?"

The woman who asked the question was white-faced and peevish. The railway carriage in which she was sitting was so cold, even for January. Nor had she yet recovered from one of the worst Atlantic crossings she could remember. It was only three hours since they had docked at Southampton.

The mild-looking man to whom she had spoken blinked. Really, his wife should not ask questions in such a loud voice. There were two other people in the carriage . . . a grey-haired American and a pretty girl with very rosy cheeks. They must certainly have heard her. Not that she had said anything dreadful . . . but in England people did not say things in railway carriages at all, at least, not audibly. This brazen behaviour on the part of his wife distressed him. He feared it meant that she was having one of her moods. He regarded her timorously from under his eyelids, folded the newspaper and gently handed it to her.

"I haven't my glasses," she observed, in acid and extremely resonant tones. "Can't you read it for me?"

This was really dreadful. She actually was having one of her moods. She knew how he hated pushing himself forward, and here she was demanding that he should make a public exhibition of himself. He looked quickly and fearfully at his travelling companions. The grey-haired American was leaning back with folded arms, gazing at a monochrome of the sea-front at Blackpool. Being somewhat short-sighted, he was mistaking it for the ruins of Ypres, which accounted for the expression of cultured pathos on his face. The girl was looking out of the window, searching the darkening fields with bright eyes, as though some adventure awaited her in the hurrying chiaroscuro. Both persons, to the little man, looked highly suspicious. He was sure they were listening to every word.

"Of course, if you're too tired. . . ."

He blinked again. He knew that voice . . . like an angry little whistle. There was nothing for it but to humor her. With hands that trembled slightly he lifted the newspaper to his face, and murmured:

"£250,000,000 Plans for Electrification of Britain."

"I can't hear a word."

FEELING worse than ever, he repeated the sentence. It was a horrible sentence. He said "electrecifation" instead of "electrification," and he was sure the American smiled. His wife said:

"What do I care about that? Besides, it won't be done. Nobody ever does anything in this impossible country. I don't know why we ever came back. They can't even heat the railway carriages. What else is there?"

He scanned the paper. "Little Princess Elizabeth . . ." he began nervously.

"For heaven's sake don't tell me anything about that child. . . ."

"Really, my dear. . . ."

"Find something about somebody one knows. All our friends can't be dead. Hasn't anything happened to anybody?" The tone of her voice indicated that by "anything" she meant "anything unpleasant."

He searched desperately. There was a story about a man who boiled his wife in tar, but one did not know him. He rather wished one did. Ah! here was something. He read:

"Irela to give Farewell Opera Season." He pronounced the word correctly . . . Irayla.

"What . . . again?"

It was evident that this item of news was more to the taste, not only of his wife, but of another occupant of the carriage. For the rosy-cheeked girl turned quickly from the window and stared at him with wide-open eyes, as though he had addressed her personally.

"It's too ridiculous," his wife snapped. "She's been giving farewells for the last twenty years. Read out what it says."

He sighed and read as follows:

IRELA TO GIVE FAREWELL
OPERA SEASON
£50,000 CAST

Laughing excitedly as she paced up and down her exquisite Adam music-room in Charles Street, Mayfair, Madame Irela, the world-famous soprano, to-day revealed her plans for bringing opera back to London.

"I've done it!" she cried. "At nine o'clock this morning I signed the contract for the biggest season of opera that London will have seen since the war.

"Covent Garden? No. Not Covent Garden. I want to be independent. So we have taken the Imperial Theatre, and we begin rehearsals next month.

"Sing myself?" Her eyes shone with such youthful ardor that it was difficult to believe that Irela was a star long before the dawn of the present century. "Sing myself?" she repeated. And then, spontaneously she darted to the piano, struck a chord, and sang, as though in challenge to the audacious questioner, the opening phrases of the "Cufietta Rosa," from the second act of La Boheme. All the old Irela brilliance echoed through the room in that enchanted moment, and the listeners were spellbound.

Responding to questions, Irela admitted that she would herself take the leading roles in La Boheme, Faust, and Othello. "I may sing Juliet, too," she added. "It depends on the weather!

"And another thing!" She held up a finger on which glittered the celebrated yellow diamond which had been presented to her by the late Tsar of Russia. "I have engaged Baba Letolle, the new Spanish soprano, to sing some of the roles of which I am growing a little tired."

The "Evening Clarion" understands that the expenses in connection with the forthcoming season will amount to not less than £50,000.

He finished reading, and glanced timidly over his shoulder. The rosy-cheeked girl was staring even more openly than before. Really, somebody ought to speak to her about it. One day she would stare at a man who . . . His wife interrupted his thoughts.

"She must be sixty if she's a day."

"Oh, surely not more than fifty."

"I'm fifty-eight," she intoned, observing his embarrassment with relish. "And I heard her forty years ago in Paris, when she was just becoming famous. If she is only fifty now, then she was only ten when I heard her, which is rather early to develop a double chin and a top C, apart from the question of being seduced by Faust."

"A remarkable woman," he ventured.

"How anybody can pay to hear her nowadays I can't imagine."

"We heard her only three years ago, and her voice was still wonderful."

"Yes. But what in?" She beat a tattoo on the floor with her cold feet. "'Voi che

---

The most discussed Novel of the day!

BITTER controversy rages around this book, the Gaumont-British film version of which is shortly to be released in Australia by Fox Films. Beverley Nichols, the author, was at one time private secretary to Dame Nellie Melba, and he has been charged with drawing the dominant character of "Evensong" from Melba.

But is the singer, Irela, of "Evensong," meant to represent the Melba whose genius shed lustre on the name of Australia wherever her superb voice was heard. . .? Melba, whom Kings and Queens delighted to honor, and for whose memory every true Australian cherishes a tender reverence! Beverley Nichols vigorously denies the charge.

There is only one way to judge the book. Read it for yourself. You may hate it. You may delight in it. The Australian Women's Weekly is giving you this opportunity to form your own opinion of a book which is one of the most discussed novels of to-day.

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Supete,' which must have been specially written for old women. When she sang anything with trills, or high notes, it was like an elderly canary forgetting itself."

"Oh, come. . . ." He was sure that girl was going to join in the conversation.

"And now she's dragging out all those old operas again! 'Faust' and 'Boheme' and 'Romeo' . . . in 1931! After we've heard 'Roussalka' and 'Rosenkavalier' and 'Sadko'! It's too ridiculous. It wouldn't be possible in any country but England, where no prima donna is taken seriously until she's wheeled on to the platform at the Albert Hall in a bath chair, to sing to a forest of ear-trumpets. Why did we ever come back to this country? Why did she ever come back to it, either, when everybody knows that her cher ami is still in Africa, for which I really don't blame him, considering that he . . ."

What she might have said next will never be known. For at this point the girl in the corner leant forward and spoke. Her cheeks were scarlet and her voice trembled dangerously. She said:

"Would you mind deferring this discussion? I am Madame Irela's niece."

THE train pounded on through the darkening fields, and Pauline Joycey—for that was the girl's name—stared out the window, seeing only the silver arrows of rain that struck the glass, splintered, and dribbled downwards. Nothing would induce her to turn her head, True, the little man who had read from the newspaper was still begging her pardon, clearing his throat, and shuffling about in great confusion. But the woman had said nothing at all—had merely stared at her insolently, shrugged her shoulders, and closed her eyes.

A sense of intolerable strain pervaded the carriage. They were all thinking furiously. The woman was thinking that the journey had not been really quite so boring as she had feared. The man was thinking that if this did not teach his wife to hold her peace in public places, nothing would. The American was thinking that the legend of impermeable English reserve appeared to be a little over-rated.

Pauline herself was seething with outraged loyalty. That hateful woman! Darling to malign Irela! Casting slurs on her great, her almost mythical kinswoman, whose photographs, in innumerable attitudes, had adorned the wooden walls of her late father's ranch in Canada! And what was that phrase she had used . . . cher ami . . . did not that mean, in Europe, something horrid? She did not think much of Europe if it prostituted so sweet a phrase as "dear friend" to an ignoble meaning!

It was too, too bad. When she thought of all that Irela had done for her, was still going to do for her!

IRELA, sitting up one dim November morning, in her scarlet lacquer bed, with a London fog looming through the peach-colored curtains, opened a letter and screamed. She pushed her lace boudoir cap away from her forehead, tugged a pillow behind her, read some more of the letter and screamed again. A little red-faced woman bobbed out of the bathroom and regarded her with alarmed surprise. Noticing her, Irela cried:

"Tremlowe! Get me my lawyer, Mr. Hackertson, on the telephone. Quick!"

While Tremlowe was getting the number, Irela shuffled indignantly out of bed, put her feet into a pair of ermine lined slippers, drew a quilted satin dressing gown over her shoulders, inside out, and read the letter to the bitter end. Just as she had finished it the telephone bell rang. She snatched the receiver from Tremlowe, and began to speak.

Even the combination of the telephone, the early morning, and a bad temper could not rob Irela's voice of its unearthly charm. It was like the voice of a little boy, an angelic little boy, and even if Irela had not been a dominating woman she would have been forced on many occasions to use stronger language than she would normally employ, simply in order to counteract the sweetness that echoed willy nilly, from her throat. Bitter experience had taught her that people were only too inclined, even when she was scolding them, to be lulled into an irritating trance by the sound of her words, entirely ignoring their content. So she had learnt to say "damn" like a trumpet blast, and this usually fixed their attention.

"That damned brother-in-law of mine," she cried to Hackertson, in her little boy's voice, "has left me fifty thousand dollars' worth of debts. What'll we have to do about it?"

A consoling growl came from the other end of the wire.

"I can't hear a word you say," she snapped. "Speak up."

While he spoke up she raised her eyes beseechingly to the ceiling, as though to pray for patience, and jogged the telephone up and down. Then she cut him short again.

"I know all that." The little boy's voice sounded very angry indeed. "I know my sister left him a hundred thousand five years ago. I know he ought to have been shot. I only want to know if I shall have to pay it."

IRELA, from the first moment she read the letter had decided that she would have to pay it. She was a proud woman, and she was not going to see her family disgraced. A nice story that would make for the papers. "Irela's brother-in-law dies in poverty." Besides, there was Pauline, who, as far as she remembered, was a charming girl, with a very fitting appreciation of the honor of being the niece of the greatest singer in the world. Oh, yes, she would pay, and look after Pauline, and all that, but she had not the least intention of announcing this as her decision. She must be persuaded by Mr. Hackertson, apparently against her will. Then, if anything went wrong, she could always say, "I told you so."

Mr. Hackertson, who had been her legal adviser for nearly forty years, was well aware of these tactics. He knew what was expected of him. He would say, "You must pay," and she would tell him that she would have to sell her tiara with the pink drop pearls, and then he would remind her that she had more than enough standing on deposit in each of at least six American banks, and then she would talk about "the income tax man," and finally she would ring off in a vile temper. He calculated that he would get the cheque before lunch. He did.

Pauline knew nothing of this. All she knew was that suddenly, like an angel out of the skies, Irela had come to the rescue. The debts were paid, the farm sold up, and she herself, with a little money "to go on with," was summoned to England. Irela, with a delicacy she did not always show, realised that Pauline might feel that she was dependent on charity. So she had suggested that Pauline should be her unofficial private secretary. For six weeks Pauline slaved at revising her shorthand, which she had already mastered at college in Montreal. She prayed—oh, indeed, she prayed that she might be of some use.

THE train was ten minutes late, and had Irela been awaiting an ordinary visitor she would have been extremely annoyed.

Other emotions, however, had warmed her breast.

"Sister's" orphan daughter was seeking refuge in her bosom. "Sister's" little girl was coming from the darkness to the light, to bask in her fame. That was how Irela dramatised the situation. Hence her appearance at the station.

It was not only sentiment that stirred Irela. Many people had recognised her on the platform, and this, she felt, was quite as it should be. Doubtless it was due to the announcements of the opera season in the evening papers. She thrilled at the thought that she was once again in the limelight. For two years—ever since her farewell season at the Metropolitan in New York—she had been lying low. A "Welcome Home" concert at the Albert Hall, eighteen months ago, had been her last big public appearance. "Big" it certainly was, for the vast hall had been crammed from floor to ceiling, and she had never sung more superbly. But it was high time she sang again.

She walked this way and that, noting the nudges, the whispered comments. In the background stood a footman in dark-green livery watching her, holding a sable rug over his arm, occasionally glancing back at the waiting car, which was a pre-war Rolls. Why should Irela, with her wealth and her smartness (she had even engaged the footman because he looked so pale and dissipated, and somehow she felt that dissipation, in footmen, reflected an aristocratic aura on their employers), why should she cling to this old car? For the very excellent reason that it was unique. Everybody knew that if she chose she could have Hispanos plated in platinum and Isottas with onyx bodies, and such Bentleys as only bad boys dream about. Nobody, however, noticed new and expensive cars. But everybody noticed her Rolls. It was almost equivalent to a patent of royalty. It was far more effective even than Lord Lonsdale's yellow and coroneted chariot, which always gave strangers the impression that his Lordship was touring Mayfair with a new line in ladies' hats.

Pride, sentimentality, and irritation . . . these were the dominating forces in Irela's breast at the moment . . . and as the train continually failed to arrive, irritation began to oust the other emotions. But now there was a stir around her, people were moving forward, there was a shrill whistle, porters ran about, here was the train at last, and here . . . why, here, running straight towards her, was Pauline. She held out her arms and cried "Darling!" Her eyes were wet.

They looked at one another.

Irela saw a fresh, intelligent young woman of about twenty-two, dressed simply in black. To her great relief she observed that Pauline was pretty, but not too pretty, and that she was a "lady."

PAULINE'S first impression, on looking at Irela, was one of sumptuous untidiness. Irela's hat was of exquisite simplicity, decorated only by a chaste Cartier pin in diamonds. But strands of deeply dyed black hair escaped from underneath the brim. Her sable coat, too, was perfectly cut, but the collar was rumpled at the back. On the lapel a spray of orchids hung crookedly. Round her neck hung three perfect ropes of flawless pearls. They badly needed pulling into place.

But it was not with these details of dress that Pauline, in this first moment, concerned herself. Rather was it with Irela's face and figure. She was a short woman still inclined to rotundity, though far slimmer than she had been in her prime. But there was nothing rotund about her face. She wore absolutely no make-up, and this seemed to accentuate the clear-cut features. The nose was sharp, the lips thin, the cheek-bones had a high, Indian contour. Only her chin betrayed her age. Had it not been for her chin, Irela might have looked under fifty. As it was, she looked nearer sixty.

"That creature in the railway carriage was right. . . . She is an old woman!" So Pauline thought, and was shaken by a strange, sudden tremor of sympathy. "And she is just embarking on the biggest

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operatic programme of her whole career!" Impulsively she put out her arms, once again, and drew this famous little sable-coated woman to her.

Then Irela, suddenly dispelling the mists of sentiment which were gathering round them, snapped in a high, sweet treble, "John!"

"Yes, m'lady?"

The dissipated one was fawning before her.

"Go and see about Miss Joycey's luggage."

"Only a cabin trunk," said Pauline, "with my name in big yellow letters."

Palely he departed.

Pauline had spoken a little absently, being somewhat perturbed by the expression "m'lady." Had Irela married again . . . a nobleman? Had she been knighted? No, she remembered, women could not be knighted. What, then, could it be? Perhaps Irela guessed her thoughts. For she said, a little self-consciously:

"They all will call me 'my lady.' Isn't it absurd?"

"I think it's rather nice," said Pauline, still puzzled.

"You see," confided Irela, "it always used to be 'Madame.' But, then, somehow, after the war, with all those Dames and things, Madame sounded rather pompous. So then Arthur Kober—he's a genius, darling, and is dining to-night—said that as I was the Queen of Song I ought to be called 'your majesty'." She laughed, her high twinkling, little boy's laugh. "But that was too, too pomposo, so I thought it would be best to compromise on 'my lady.' The servants like it, you see." She looked at Pauline a little defiantly.

"I still think it ought to be 'your majesty,'" said Pauline, and Irela was enchanted, and thought, "What a divine niece I have," and "Blood will tell," and "Where is that damned John?" Pauline followed up her success by asking about the opera, but Irela said that it was such a long story, and all so exciting, that they must keep it until they got home.

JOHN arrived, having located the luggage, but he said that they must wait yet another five minutes before it could be placed on the car. Conversation therefore flagged, as it will on such occasions, and Pauline glanced round at the new and fascinating people who jostled her on all sides.

Then, suddenly, through a gap in the crowd, she saw a young man of exceptional comeliness pushing his way in their direction. But it was not his face which attracted her attention. Any girl who has lived for long in a Canadian University town soon becomes immune to masculine good looks. Rather was it the fact that he was smiling. . . . yes, actually smiling, and at her.

She smiled back. She had not the least idea who he was, and she did not very much care.

He pushed a little nearer to them. He lifted up his hand, smiled again, and pointed to Irela. He seemed to be anxious to attract her attention.

Pauline put her hand on Irela's arm.

"Look," she said. "There's a friend of yours trying to speak to you."

"Where?" said Irela. She peered in the direction of the young man. She was rather short-sighted, and she did not wish to put on her glasses in public.

"That young man there . . . look . . . he's just got through the crowd."

He had indeed got through the crowd, and was standing only a few feet before them, in a space made by the luggage. And he was holding a camera into which he was peering, focusing it upon them.

"Oh!" cried Irela, high and shrill. "Oh!" And then she stepped forward, raised her arm, and brought it down with all her force on the young man's hands.

Instantly there was uproar. The camera crashed to the ground with a sound of breaking glass. People surged round them. The young man staggered back, white and bewildered. Only Irela held her ground. She stood there, facing the young man, straight, as a ramrod, with cheeks flushed an angry red.

"How dare you try to photograph me?" she cried. "How dare you?"

"But, ma'am. . . ." Pauline by now was at Irela's side. She felt very frightened. What on earth had the young man done? From his accent he was an American, and he certainly looked harmless enough. But perhaps he was an anarchist in disguise?

Irela screamed, "Sneaking round me like a thief . . . trying to photograph me. . . . I won't have it. . . . I won't have it, I tell you. . . ."

"But, ma'am, how was I to know that you . . ."

"How were you to know?" Her voice rose higher and higher. "Because every editor in Fleet Street knows. Because I won't have libellous pictures of me published in the papers or I shall sue the papers. Because yours isn't the first camera I've knocked out of a man's hands. And it won't be the last!"

Irela paused, breathless. The young man picked up his camera, shook it, made a wry face, put it under his arm. As he did so, a queer glint came into his eyes. He stepped closer to Irela and raised his hand. For a terrible moment Pauline feared that he was going to strike her. But he was only commanding attention. He got it.

"You're a great singer," he drawled, "and I'm only a bum freelance photographer. So I suppose it doesn't matter to you that you've just broken the only means I've got of earning a living. Still, I'd just like you to know this, that if it saves me from coming into contact with any more dames like you, you'll have done me the best turn I ever had done in my life. Good afternoon."

He stared at her with cold contempt. As he turned away, his eyes met Pauline's, held them for a minute. Then quite unaccountably he smiled, raised his hat, and was gone.

Irela did not move. She stood very erect, tapping her foot on the platform, running her small gloved hand up and down her ropes of pearls. She glared around her with such ferocity that the crowd, fearing further temperamental assaults, quickly melted, not without sniggers. Suddenly she spied a small, elderly man with mild features and white hair.

"Mr. Toms," she shrilled.

The little man turned, raised his bowler hat, and advanced to her, saying, "Madame!"

"Did you see that, just then?" said Irela, snatching away her hand which he was kissing.

"That, just then?" He blinked at her.

Impatiently Irela explained. She wanted to know who the young man was. He must be ruined. Mr. Toms, being the doyen of musical critics, and the most knowledgeable man in Fleet Street, knew everything. He must find out.

He did. In a few moments he had ascertained from a colleague that the monster who had tried to photograph Irela bore the ignoble name of Donald Gage, that he was an American of the lowest order, and that he had a sort of roving commission as a photographer for the despised New York "Clarion," from even which humble post he would shortly be dislodged.

"Dear Mr. Toms!" crooned Irela. All the honey had returned to her voice, all the angry red had drained from her complexion. Her eyes were moist and kind. As she gave him her hand to kiss she was like a ripe but still desirable princess who had just been rescued from a position of intolerable danger.

Over an almost deserted platform they swept triumphantly to the car. As she sank into the cushions Irela drew most of the sable rug over her, leaving Pauline a row of tails which barely covered her right knee. She smiled wistfully. "They never stop persecuting me," she smiled sadly. There was a timbre about her voice, as she said it, that made Pauline clutch her hand, spontaneously, protectively. . . .

BUT as the car swept through the street, blurred and golden with the rain and the lights, Pauline leant forward and said softly, "Why were you so angry that he tried to photograph you?"

Irela withdrew her hand and her face hardened. She did not look at Pauline, and Pauline, glancing timidly at the tense, carven profile, wondered what she could be thinking of to bring so bitter a shadow across her face.

Irela's thoughts were cruelly simple. She was wondering how long the game could be kept up. Oh, this fake, fake . . . how sick she was of it all! For a moment she felt as though she might take Pauline into her confidence, tell her something of the unutterable weariness of the perpetual struggle to keep her supremacy when her voice and her body were both growing old. Too early yet, she thought. So she said sharply:

"I photograph very badly."

Pauline looked surprised. "But I've seen some lovely photographs of you."

"Not snapshots," said Irela, rather grimly.

"No . . . but still . . ."

"It's like this, you see. I've accustomed the public to have a certain idea of what I look like, and it's much best that they should keep that idea. I've got a favorite profile, a favorite full face, and a favorite three-quarter face. Those are the ones that I send out for autographs. Then I've got some others for the press—all done by one man—Mr. Loope." This candid confession ended in a sudden gleeful laugh. At the thought of Mr. Loope, all Irela's troubles seemed to vanish. "There's a genius, darling," she cried. "You must go to him."

The car drew up at Charles St., the chic and dissipated John sprang out and removed the sable rug, the door opened revealing a very purple butler and a very pale footman. Irela walked in quickly, crying as she walked, "Tremlowe, Tremlowe!" The high, sweet note fluttered up the lofty stairs, like a questing bird.

Pauline was to learn, very quickly, that the sense of hurry and rush and excitement which now pervaded the house was a normal accompaniment to Irela's existence. Irela's friends lived lives not unlike those of railway porters—they were always being summoned here and there, they were usually carrying something for her, there was always a great deal of noise, and the tips at the end were frequently disappointing. Yet, just as one has only to lift one's finger at a railway station to obtain the services of twelve stalwart men, so Irela had only to lift her finger to gain the consolation of a dozen new friendships.

Charles St. was more like a railway station than ever, at this moment, with Pauline's trunk being brought into the hall, and Irela supervising the directions.

"No—not in the lift," she was crying. "The lift's just been newly lacquered. I can't help it if it is heavy—you must take it up the stairs. James . . . why do you let Dingley do all the work? Really! No—not like that—over your shoulder—why don't you stoop down more—mind, mind! You'll knock over that vase. Well, take it away then. Percy! Why do you stand there doing nothing? Why don't you take away the vase? No, don't put it on the stairs . . . really, was there ever such stupidity? It's perfectly simple. It's not heavy at all . . . if you would only stoop . . . there, that's better . . . fancy it taking three strong men to lift a little trunk like that. . . ."

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WHILE this invigorating monologue was in progress, Pauline took the opportunity to look round at her new home. It seemed to her quite delightful, and indeed it was. Irela, who had been born without any great natural taste, had been sensible enough to take advice. Boni de Castellane, years ago, had lent her his aid when she had been furnishing an apartment in Paris, and had steered her tactfully away from the worst horrors of the Second Empire, past the treacherous shallows of the Directoire, into a quiet and conventional haven of Louis Seize. What he had done for her in France, others had done in England. As a result, she now knew whether a thing was good or bad, and had achieved, through long discipline and study, the judgment which is vaguely called "good taste," by which we mean a combination of qualities partly antiquarian, partly commercial, wholly fashionable, and only incidentally connected with art.

Charles St. was decorated "in the best of taste." It was an Adam house, and Irela had taken great pains to obtain the correct shade of Adam blue-grey. Everything was charmingly simple and exceptionally "good." There was some very fine Queen Anne furniture—the red lacquer cabinets in the music-room were museum pieces—some extremely beautiful Louis Quinze boiseries—and some quite delicious painted Italian chairs. She had not many pictures, but what she had were worth having, if somewhat mixed. In the hall there was a very decorative Granacci and one of the finest Antonio di Ducci fragments in existence. There were some lovely Guardis in the dining-room.

"Tremlowe . . . Tremlowe," cried Irela, and again her voice drifted like a questing bird. This time the quest was successful. A little red-faced woman in a black dress hurried downstairs, saying, "Yes, m'lady, yes, m'lady," on every step.

"This is Miss Joycey, Tremlowe. You must look after her properly."

"Yes, m'lady." Tremlowe gave Pauline a feeble smile.

"Give Tremlowe your keys, darling, and she'll unpack for you." Pauline did so.

"Now come and look at all my pretties," cried Irela, and before she knew where she was Pauline was being rushed up to the music-room. She exclaimed at the beauty of it as soon as she entered the room. But Irela was not paying any attention to her. She slammed the door dramatically and then stood quite still, with her fingers to her lips.

"Those servants . . . they'll kill me" She spoke in a harsh whisper that was quite devoid of the Irela "quality."

PAULINE was greatly distressed. "Why . . . has anything happened?"

"Happened?" Irela gave an extremely mirthless laugh. "Didn't you notice Dingley's neck?"

"Dingley?"

"Yes . . . the chauffeur. Didn't you notice his neck?"

"I don't think . . ."

"Really, darling!" Irela spoke quite impatiently. "It was bright red. Bright red! I can't think how anybody could have failed to notice it. Still, I suppose, being your first day. . . . Anyway, when Dingley's neck is red it's a sure sign that he's been drinking."

"Oh, dear!"

"I don't know what to do," bewailed Irela. "I've told him about it. I've told him that he might at least remember that when he's carrying me he's carrying rather a precious burden. . . ." She sank disconsolately into a chair.

"Indeed, indeed he should!" agreed Pauline fervently.

"Will you speak to him about it, darling? Not now . . . but next time?"

"Of course." Pauline wondered what was the precise etiquette for informing chauffeurs that their necks were too red. Perhaps she might carry a piece of pink material about with her and tell him that he could grow so pink, but no pinker. She checked the thought as irreverent.

"That'll be part of your duties, darling," said Irela. "I can't do everything. This opera season alone. . . . I shall kill myself. . . ."

"Anything . . . anything I can do. . . ."

"There's John, for example," she continued. "The first footman. Very smart, didn't you think?"

"Yes . . . he certainly is."

"So unhealthy looking," added Irela with relish. "Bad blood, I expect. But that's not the point. I don't mind him looking pale and tired, but he fights with Percy, that's the second footman. And the butler—his name's Scott—my dear, he's a half-wit—utterly unable to keep them in order. You must see to it."

"I'll do my very best . . . as soon as possible."

"Darling!" Irela gave her a charming smile. But her face quickly clouded over again. "What's the use of a butler if he can't keep order? They don't respect him. That's what it is. Mrs. McPherson—she's the cook, and a great woman, most economical, too, and she adores me—she said, 'How can we respect Mr. Scott? When he doesn't even respect himself?'"

"Can't you get rid of him?" inquired Pauline gently.

"Yes—if I can find another—but where are all the butlers?" She looked at Pauline quite fiercely. "I don't know. One would think, with all this unemployment, and houses being closed down right and left—you'd think there'd be thousands of butlers only too eager . . . but I don't know where they are. Nobody can get a decent butler. I don't know what we're coming to."

"How long have you had Tremlowe?" asked Pauline, hoping that this would prove a more agreeable subject.

"Thirty years," snapped Irela. "And it's thirty years too long. She forgets everything. I might as well dress myself . . . in fact I almost do. Do you know what she did this afternoon? She sent me out with a hole in my glove!"

Pauline registered a becoming dismay.

"Oh, but that's nothing to what she does sometimes! She puts out odd pairs of stockings. She lets buttons come off my shoes and then doesn't discover it till she's doing them up. Besides, she hides things. Oh, yes, she does! I'm quite certain that she does it on purpose. She's probably hiding things of yours now. We'd better run upstairs and stop her!"

Already Irela was on her feet, and at the door. She darted to the lift and pressed a button. It groaned up. They stepped in. The lift was like a brilliant jewel-box, flocked with gold, softly lit. They arrived at the top landing, and walked down a corridor.

Pauline's room was not large, but it was charming. It had primrose-colored walls, and the curtains were grey toile de Jouy. The furniture was modern painted Italian except for a Sheraton writing-desk. Tremlowe was bustling about the room, spreading out Pauline's clothes . . . which were few and simple . . . on the bed.

"Haven't you finished yet?"

"I wasn't quite sure where Miss Joycey wanted . . ."

"Supposing I help Tremlowe?" suggested Pauline.

"Oh, very well." Irela sighed, prepared to say something, thought better of it, and then gave Pauline a particularly charming smile. "I'll leave you for a little bit, darling."

"You must be tired yourself," said Pauline.

"Tired?" She laughed . . . and this time it was the true Irela laugh, the little boy's laugh. "I'm never tired. Still, I'll rest till dinner. At eight." She turned to the door. Then she came back, and put her hands impulsively on Pauline's shoulders. "I hope you'll be happy here, darling. . . . I do so hope you'll be happy."

CHAPTER 2.

DINNER was almost over. The top lights had been turned out by John, the pale footman, who looked more dissipated than ever ("Really," thought Irela, "those circles under his eyes—too chic!"). The room was now lit only by four unshaded candles in tall Waterford candlesticks. There were no flowers on the table. Irela never had flowers on her table, because, as she said, "I don't like carnations in my soup." The real reason was that she had heard—she could not quite remember where or when—that flowers on dining-tables were bourgeois. She had also observed personally that in the "best" houses—by which she implied the dreariest, the dampest, and the least sociable—there were no flowers on the table. Ergo, she had no flowers.

There they sat, Pauline, Irela, and Arthur Kober. Pauline in white, Irela in scarlet and diamonds, Kober in an old velvet dinner jacket. However, you never noticed what Kober wore. He was too remarkable a personality. As soon as Pauline set eyes on him she felt, "Here is a man who is destined to play a part in my life." She studied him closely.

Arthur Kober was a Russian of the old regime. His real name was Koberoff. He was brilliant, ugly, fiery, perverse. He lived on his nerves and his overdraft. Some women soothed the former, others appeased the latter. Many women regretted both. His life was a spectacular prelude that never seemed to resolve into a second movement.

Red-haired, hideous, with hands that trembled alarmingly and an upper lip that twitched to curious and forbidding smiles, he yet remained a boy—the bad boy of the family, or, rather, the bad boy of no family; for his father, his mother, and every human being he loved had been butchered in the Revolution. He was alone in the world, except for a little white French wife, with big, black, burning eyes, who worshipped him.

You would not have guessed his nationality, for he spoke with an Oxford drawl. And by some strange instinct of self-torture he constantly announced to the world that he was a Bolshevik. His whole being quivered with loathing of the men who had destroyed his country, yet he never lost an opportunity of paying them a weird allegiance . . . speaking with a sort of hiss, through half-closed lips.

"You see, I'm a Red," he would whisper to respectable persons.

"Speaking as a Bolshevik . . ." he once snarled, to an eminent gathering of the Royal College of Music. And, as a result, his somewhat heterodox conclusions on the counterpoint of Berlioz had met with an unwonted respect.

It was as though he deliberately lacerated himself . . . purposely kept open the wounds that time would never heal.

He was speaking now, quickly, abruptly, leaning over the table so that the candle-light cast shadows under his nose, making it look more enormous than ever. He emphasised his remarks by waving his right hand, which trembled as though he had the palsy. Yet there was no sign of tremor in his voice, as he said:

"This must be your last farewell, Irela."

Irela looked at him indignantly. "What do you mean?"

"You know very well what I mean."

Irela was not quite sure whether she ought to be angry. Really, Kober said such impossible things. In front of Pauline, too! She crossed her feet nervously under the table.

"I've never given a farewell before," she said. "I'm not like"—(and here she named a woman who is still annually saying good-bye to the concert platforms of the world, in ever shriller accents). "I'm not like her, I hope! She's been saying farewell, for the

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last time, every season since the war. And her voice said farewell to her long before the war was ever heard of. I hope you're not accusing me of that?"

"You have said farewell before." His voice was smooth as ever.

"Not to opera," she replied sharply.

"No. Not to opera. But your name has been placarded on huge posters all over London, all over New York, all over the provinces, with the word 'Farewell' on it, in very large type, on more than one occasion."

"But with the words 'prior to world tour' underneath," she retorted.

To which he added: "Yes, in very small type."

"Arthur Kober," she said, "you'll make me lose my temper."

"I'm sorry. I only want to get the thing quite clear. Is this to be the last time you sing, or not?"

"In opera, yes."

"Does that mean you're going to go on singing opera, from the concert platform, when this is over?"

"I haven't decided."

"If you do, you oughtn't to use the word 'farewell.' You, above all people, oughtn't to juggle with that word."

"Juggle with it?" Irela, quite definitely, was preparing to be very angry indeed. "What do you mean? I'm an honest woman!"

KOBER flinched. "Don't say you're an honest woman, please, Irela. You're always saying you're an honest woman."

"I am!"

"Who cares whether you're an honest woman or not? There are millions of honest women in the world, boring the world to death. Why debase yourself to their level? It isn't clever of you. If you say it—as you do—as a sort of common gesture, the great artist using a vulgar phrase just to heighten the fact that she is a great artist—then I suppose there's some point in it. But for heaven's sake don't tell me you're an honest woman, because I'm not interested. All I care about is that you should be an honest artist."

She sat up very erect, and tapped her fingers irritably on the plate in front of her. She was not looking at him. Then suddenly she swung round, looked him straight in the face, and cried:

"Why are you saying these things? Why are you harping on this wretched word? Why mustn't I ever sing again when this season is over?"

He returned her gaze without flinching. "You know why," he said quietly.

For a moment they stared at one another. Then her eyes fell, and she bit her lip. Pauline had a terrible feeling that she might cry. But no. For when she looked up again her face was hard and bright. She lifted a glass of champagne to her lips, and laughed. "If I had ever been told that I should allow any man to speak to me as you've spoken to-night, I shouldn't have believed it."

Kober shrugged his shoulders. "Divine lady," he sighed . . . and still the hand shook, perpetually, before him . . . "I am not talking to you. I am talking to the greatest artist who ever lived." Irela's expression softened a little. "You are not concerned in this. I have no interest in you. I am merely interested . . . no, interested is not the word . . . I am passionately devoted . . . to a voice. That voice has been acclaimed, by the world, as the most lovely sound that echoes in the world to-day. It is. And all I want is to be sure that when it echoes for the last time, it will be still as sweet as ever. . . . Do you understand?"

Irela put her hand impulsively on his. "Don't," she whispered . . . "you'll make me cry."

"I don't want to make you cry," said Kober. He spoke almost coldly, yet his eyes were suspiciously bright. "I only want to make you live . . . for ever . . . in history."

THEY went upstairs to the music-room. Long, lofty, with a shining floor on which the shadows flickered from a bright fire. A Steinway piano stood at each end of the room. There were immense waxed Madonna lilies in the corners, that drenched the air around them with sweetness.

"Phew!" cried Irela, clattering over the uncarpeted floor, "the room stinks. Open the window, darling."

Pauline went to the window, opened it a fraction. Outside, London glimmered darkly, a faint orange glow over the huddled roofs.

"Now we've got to talk business," said Irela, settling herself in a high-backed chair covered with faded yellow brocade. "You'd better listen, Pauline. It'll be useful to you."

They all sat down. During the next half-hour the room rang with the two voices, Kober's quiet and vibrant, Irela's always like a little boy's, but saying things a great deal sharper than a little boy would say. For there was, apparently, nothing that she did not know about the commercial side of opera, nothing that she had not considered. They discussed percentages, matinees, the number of seats to be allotted to the pit, the box to be set aside for the Royal Family, the price of programmes, the possibility of a general election. Kober, with all his experience, all his Jewish quickness, found himself frequently pulled up on a question of detail.

"Two guineas isn't a penny too much for stalls on the opening night," she was saying sharply. "I could get three."

"It puts the Press against you."

"Nonsense, Kober. I know the Press better than you do. The Press are dears. Besides"—and here she winked at him—"the Press don't have to pay for their seats."

He conceded her the point. "And what about the ordinary nights? Are Irela nights going to be more than Baba nights?"

"Don't be a fool! Of course not! Do you want me to hand that woman a stick to beat me with? If you have lower prices for Baba nights, all those damned old women in Kensington will be going to her instead of coming to me. 'Five shillings saved,' they'll say. 'That'll pay for a taxi there and back.' And it'll start a chain of thought in their heads. Give an old woman in Kensington a chance to save five shillings and she'll murder her grandmother. No, Kober. I'm not a fool. I know my British public. Baba and I fight on equal terms."

"Fight?" He looked at her, his eyebrows raised.

She realised that she had said more than she intended. So she laughed, a little self-consciously, and replied, "No, of course not. There's not going to be any of that sort of thing in any season I'm connected with. All I meant was that we must make no distinctions—none whatever. Besides," and she rather wished that she had thought of this before, "Baba might be terribly offended if they charged more for me than for her. That's a very important point. It wouldn't be . . . well, it really wouldn't be at all the thing."

"Quite."

The fire crackled softly. Through the windows drifted the blurred hum of London. Pauline felt very happy, very thrilled. For the first time in her life she was "seeing behind the scenes." She clasped her hands, listening eagerly for more.

Irela was playing with her rings. Quite casually she said, "By the way . . . about Baba . . . I've never heard her, you know. What's she like?"

"Very Spanish. Rather sensational."

"Sensational?" She still fidgeted with her rings.

"Well—F in alt, and all that sort of thing."

Irela looked up, and sniffed. "Is she an artist?"

"No. And the voice doesn't move me, personally. But it's an astonishing voice, all the same."

"What does she look like?"

"Rather like a pink dumpling. She's broader than she's long and her eyes are like saucers. She wears an enormous blister pearl of a rather dirty shade of yellow on the first finger of her left hand. She has a great penchant for oddly-colored wigs on the stage—there's a sort of mauve one she always wears for 'Rigoletto,' and a marmalade-colored one for 'Lucia.'"

"We'll soon have that off her," said Irela grimly.

"It oughtn't to be difficult. She's very tractable."

"Can she act?"

"Certainly. With both arms and both legs."

Irela became suddenly arch. "Will she cut me out, Arthur? Will she cut me out?"

Quite gravely he said, "She'll get a lot of applause."

THIS was not quite the answer she desired. Perhaps he realised his mistake, for he added quickly, "The idea of comparing her with you is, of course, too fantastic for me to consider."

Which appeared to satisfy her. For she said abruptly, "Who's she sleeping with?"

Kober looked reproachfully at her, then at Pauline, "My dear lady . . ."

"Oh, never mind Pauline. You don't care, do you, darling?"

Pauline laughed and said "No." She was blushing a little—she could not help that—but she terribly wanted to fit in. So, with a great effort, and with mantling cheeks, she said, "Do tell us who it is that she . . . well . . . you know . . ."

At which they both laughed very agreeably.

"Sovino," said Kober. "He happens to be her husband."

"What?" Irela stared at him, looking extremely annoyed.

"Why—what's the matter with that?"

"He's conducting 'Bohème.' And he'll conduct abominably just to spite me."

"What nonsense!"

"It isn't nonsense. It's happened to me before. If a conductor's in love with one prima donna he takes jolly good care to conduct badly for the prima donna he's not in love with. Otherwise he'd get his eyes torn out. Oh, this is terrible!"

"Well . . . if you feel that way about it . . ."

"I certainly do. Sovino shall not conduct for me. That's the first thing I shall have to attend to."

"Why don't you have an affaire with him yourself?"

Instantly her mood changed. She was entranced by the suggestion—toyed with it whimsically, with many high laughs and bird-like trills. Playfully she ruffled Kober's hair. Pauline was fascinated, bewildered, but not really shocked. For, after all, was not her aunt an "old lady"? And did not Pauline, in the strange innocence of youth, assume, as a law of nature, that "old ladies" did not have affaires?

In the middle of Irela's antics John came in, put down a tray of whisky, Evian water, barley water and gingerbread biscuits. He regarded Irela mournfully under his black-ringed eyes and said, "Will there be anything else to-night, m'lady?"

No. There would be nothing else to-night.

"I'm going to have some whisky," said Irela. "And get toxy-boo."

Kober frowned at her. "That's against all rules."

"Thank God it is." She splashed the soda into the glass.

Kober stared into the fire. For a moment there was silence. Then he said:

"How often do you intend to sing yourself?"

"Three times a week."

Kober still stared into the fire.

"Well?" Irela rose to her feet and stood by the mantelpiece. She tapped her foot

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impatiently on the fender. "I suppose you're going to tell me that's too much?"

"It is . . . at any rate . . . enough," he said slowly.

"Really! What nonsense! I'd guarantee to pack that house if I sang every night for two months."

"I wasn't thinking about your packing the house. I was thinking about the strain on yourself."

She laughed, rather harshly. "Anybody would think I was a hundred, the way you talk."

"We're none of us as young as we were." He turned to Pauline and smiled. "The sight of this young lady makes me realise my own decrepitude rather acutely."

Irela said "Pshaw!" and poked the fire irritably.

"Anyway," added Kober, "you know your own capacities best."

"I should hope I do. And I'd trouble you not to tell me what I'm able to do and what I'm not. I know!" She drew herself up proudly. She made a strange figure there, with the poker still in her hand, and the diamonds sparkling round her wrinkled throat. "I haven't been singing all these years without learning a little about my own voice. Besides, it isn't as if I were going to sing anything very difficult. 'Boheme' is child's play to me."

"What about 'Faust'?"

"Well—what about 'Faust'?"

His eyes shone—strangely. He seemed suddenly intensely alive. He looked at her as a doctor might look, examining her for some hidden weakness.

"'The Jewel Song,'" he said. "That's hardly child's play."

"No?" She opened her arms, trilled, ran up the tiny scale which opens that foolish, exquisitely sugary song, and paused . . . "Wasn't that all right?"

Still he leant forward, searching her with his eyes. "Will you sing it, as you used to sing it, with a mirror held high above your head, waltzing across the stage, and taking the trill on B flat at the end?"

SHE threw him an acid look over her shoulder. "I haven't the faintest idea how I shall sing it," she retorted. "I shall sing it perfectly, that's all."

"And what about the quartet at the end? That's hard work, you know, at the end of four acts. With those top C's. And Piccolo will be singing against you, with a voice like a bull . . ."

"Oh, please stop!" She stamped her foot. "Haven't I sung it for donkey's years?"

"That's just it," he said. "You have." And there was an almost sinister note in his voice.

Irela flinched. Had she been alone she might have spoken more frankly—she might either have abused him in the coarsest language, or she might have spoken to him frankly, and asked his advice, perhaps his help. But Pauline was here, and she could do neither of these things.

Pauline was indeed here. Pauline also realised instinctively that some sort of crisis was impending. And so, with a tact extraordinary in one so young, and with a daring even more remarkable, she suddenly rose to her feet, and said, in a trembling voice:

"Auntie . . . it's terrible of me . . . but could you possibly . . ." She could not finish the sentence. She could only look very shyly, very sweetly, first at Irela, and then at the piano.

She could not have done anything more exquisitely apt. Irela's heart warmed to her. Not, of course, that she showed it at once. She would not say, "Of course, darling, I'll sing for you." She would not say that, firstly because half her attention was still angrily engaged by Kober, secondly because a very long experience had taught her automatically to say "No" whenever she was asked to sing for nothing. So she merely said, in comparatively amiable tones, "What is it?"

Pauline stood there trembling. Had she done something dreadful? She could not tell. She could only whisper, very shyly:

"If you could . . . just a tiny song . . . I know I shouldn't ask . . . but it would be such an honor."

Honor! She had chosen the one, the only, word! Honor! It was this which Irela had lacked throughout this curious evening. The honor and glory—the bowed head and beseeching gesture—the way made clear for the Queen of Song—the obeisance, the curtsying, the hush when her lips were parted. Honor! "Yes," she thought to herself, as she glanced proudly at Kober, "a little more honor could be paid by you, to me!"

She gave Pauline a melting smile. "But of course darling," she murmured. She gulped the rest of her drink. Another scornful look at Kober. Another melting smile at Pauline.

"Take my glass," she murmured. She glided to the piano.

SHE was flushed and excited. Her hair was untidy. Her dress bunched up at the back. Yet, such was the aura of magic about her, such the legend that lingered, the romance that was implicit even in the ruined profile—that profile which had glittered on so many millions of gramophone records . . . (you remember them? They bore pink labels, and they cost ten shillings and sixpence, and when you turned them on they scraped terribly. Yet, through the scraping and buzzing, Irela's voice would drift triumphantly, like a sunbeam that steals through the harsh clouds) . . . Such, as we said, was this latent spell, hanging about her, that she had only to move towards the piano, to open her lips, and the air seemed to be filled with the ghosts of forgotten songs, crowding through the ether with golden wings, to flutter about her and pay her homage, lending the faint and tenuous sweetness of memory to glorify the loveliness that lingered still in her throat, but was dying . . . dying.

She struck a chord.

She said "Damn." Then, with creaking archness she swung to Pauline and apologised for the naughty word. A high, dry laugh ended the apology. Then, pretending to mince and pout, like a little girl, she turned to Kober and said, "Can't sit on stool. Stool too high. Irela can't sing on high stool." She pursed her lips at him. Pauline, loyal, thrilled, wished that she would not purse her lips like that.

Kober glided over with a high-backed chair. She stood up. He placed the chair in position. She thanked him, tapped him playfully on the arm. Then, he was dismissed.

She sat down again. The atmosphere was tense. But not quite tense enough. She struck a chord. Pauline, longing to savor to its full this exquisite moment, tried to shut her eyes, tried to lean back, prepared to drift away. Yet, she could not drift. Even when the chords softened, modulated into the first phrases of the aubade from "Le Roi d'Ys," she could not drift. She bit her lip with impatience. What was the matter with her? Here was a moment that might never repeat itself. And the moment was passing her by.

Then, she noticed Kober. He was sitting with hunched shoulders and folded arms, deep in a chair near the fire, facing Irela. There was the shadow of a smile on his face, and it was a bitter smile. In that moment Pauline realised the secret of this strange unrest that filled her, this malaise that ruffled her spirit. It came from Kober. Not that he was hostile . . . she did not feel that. It was simply that he was outside, detached . . . impervious to the spell. Pauline felt like a young spiritualist at a seance who is suddenly made aware of the presence of a sceptic. It was as though she said to herself, "The spirits will not come . . . not to-night . . . there is an unbeliever . . ." And yet, not an unbeliever. Had he not obviously been sincere when he had spoken of his adoration of her voice?

And then the voice came. It stole through the room like a spirit . . . there was, indeed, the sense that some radiant and exquisite child had come to them from another world, and was unfolding silver scrolls of song on whose pages the pale notes glittered. Oh, the futility of words, of printed words, that flutter like dead leaves in the breath of that voice! And yet, the voice, even in memory, compels those words to flutter from the lips of all those who heard her. . . compels the one to compare it to a flower unfolding, the other to a moonbeam dancing . . . and will compel all men in whose ears it echoed to search their souls for metaphors, until the last echo in the last soul is stilled and even the memories of that beauty which she created are lost in the ultimate Silence.

KOBER walked across the room when the song was over. His footsteps creaked on the bare, polished floor. He bent over her hand and kissed it. He said nothing.

Irela's laugh—delighted, nervous . . . almost shy, rang through the room.

"Well . . . well . . . do you like me?"

"I can't speak." Pauline's voice was broken. Indeed, she could not. There was nothing to say.

"It's a pretty song," said Irela.

It was extraordinary, this embarrassment that possessed them all. As Pauline grew to know Irela more fully she learnt to expect this embarrassment as a natural consequence to Irela's singing. There was about it the quality of a religious revelation—and when the revelation was over, and the glory had departed, the listeners were abashed.

Irela did not sing again, and shortly afterwards Kober departed.

"What do you think of him?" asked Irela as they went upstairs.

"He's very clever, isn't he?"

"Sometimes I'm inclined to think he's a little too clever."

Irela stared for a moment down the stairway, as though she were making sure that Kober had left the house. Then she sighed and turned to Pauline.

"Well . . ." she said. "D'you like me?"

"Oh, my dear . . ." Pauline laughed and kissed her good-night. Like her? Already she worshipped her.

But as she lay down in her bed, and stretched her tired limbs through the cool linen sheets, it was not Irela's face that drifted before her, nor Irela's voice that rang through her brain. It was the face of a very angry young man in a grey slouch hat, and a voice that muttered, "You're a great singer and I'm only a bum freelance photographer!"

Curious conflict between the aesthetic and the physical . . . between the known and the unknown, between Irela and . . . who? What was his name? Donald . . . Donald . . . ah, Donald Gage! Lately attached to the New York "Clarion." Pauline felt ashamed of herself for thinking of him . . . still more ashamed when she realised that she would terribly like to see him again. She told herself that she must not think of these things, that she must go straight to sleep.

But there were a great many monograms on Irela's sheets and Irela's pillows . . . hard, elaborate, expensive monograms that tickled the chin and aroused the fancy. The letter "I," when entrusted to the monogramaniac, is capable of astonishing evolutions, well calculated to disturb the rest of the most placid. It was a long time before Pauline succeeded in arranging the monograms so that she could fall asleep. And even her dreams were delicately entwined by the image of Donald Gage . . .

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smiling, and whispering, "When shall we two meet again?"

CHAPTER 3

IRELA sat up in bed, scratching her head, which was partially covered with a cap of Venetian point lace. On a table by her side was the remains of her breakfast . . . a half-drained cup of orange juice and some yellow anti-starch biscuits. She wore a huge pair of glasses with tortoiseshell rims, through which she regarded Pauline with a very business-like expression.

It was a week later—February 2, to be precise—and barely a month remained before the opera season was due to open with Irela in "La Boheme." Things were therefore beginning to move quickly, as may be gathered from the orders which Irela was now issuing. Pauline, scribbling feverishly in her notebook, could barely keep pace with them.

"Tell Mr. Vernon . . ."

"Mr. Vernon?"

"Yes . . . my business manager. Please don't interrupt, darling. Tell him that I have heard definitely that their Majesties will be present on my opening night."

"Oh, how wonderful!" breathed Pauline.

Irela smiled graciously. "Tell Mr. Vernon that the theatre must be properly decorated. Pink roses all round the dress circle. But the Royal Box must be done in pink carnations because they are the Queen's favorite flower."

Pauline noted the fact.

"Tell Mrs. McPherson," continued Irela, "that she put too much salt in the cauliflower polonaise. It didn't matter so much yesterday, but if I had been singing it would have been fatal. Rub that in. Tell her that salt is fatal when I sing. Tell her the creme caramel was delicious, and just as I like, especially the crackly part. Lady Gorridge wants the recipe. Send it her, with my love. But don't forget about the salt. Fatal!"

She picked up some letters which were lying on the bed.

"There's a sweet sailor here who wants my photograph. Such a touching letter! His mother is paralysed and he wants five pounds to unparalyse her, or whatever they do. Of course we can't send him five pounds, but send him my deep sympathy, and the photograph of me kneeling down, in white, singing the 'Ave Maria.' What a comfort the fleet is!"

However, the comfort was not, apparently, lasting, for she quickly frowned, and threw Pauline a bundle of other letters. "All from people who want me to hear them sing," she snapped. "Really, one would think I was a school-marm!" Her eyes brightened. "That's rather a good phrase. Why not write and say 'Madame Irela thanks you for your kind letter, and regrets that she is not a school-marm'?"

Pauline hesitated. "Don't you think it might offend people?"

IRELA sighed. "I don't know. Perhaps. People are so touchy nowadays. Look at that!" She threw her another letter. "A most insulting letter from a wretched vicar of some place in the East End asking me to sing, and more or less taking it for granted that I will. Did you ever hear anything like it?"

"There's another letter asking you to sing . . ."

"My dear, there are always forty letters asking me to sing."

"What am I to do with them?"

"Anything you like. Only don't give them to me. Now take down this letter. It's to Mr. Toms, my press agent."

Mr. Toms? Was that not the man whom Irela had sent to destroy the young photographer? Pauline flushed, and her hand trembled slightly as she took up her pencil to write:

"Dear Mr. Toms,

"How is it that hardly any advance photographs of me have appeared in the evening newspapers? I have seen several in the morning papers and the magazines, but it is fatal . . . (underline 'fatal, darling) . . . to neglect the evening ones. People read them at lunch and tea, when they are in the city, and are in the mood to buy tickets.

"Also please do not use 'The Irish Nightingale' as a title to any of the pictures. It does not sound chic. I have not really cared to call myself 'The Irish Nightingale' since King Edward died, for it was he who gave me the title, and even that was largely for political reasons. Ireland can get on quite well without my assistance. I cannot carry the Empire on my shoulders.

"Who is putting in all those silly stories about Baba Letoile in the gossip columns? It would not of course be you, but I should like to know who it is, because they make the poor woman look ridiculous. The one about her wanting to go to the top of St. Paul's Cathedral and sing a psalm is not only vulgar and incredible, but extremely annoying to me personally, because she is a member of my company, and if she starts singing in the open air she will catch cold, and that would involve a breach of contract. Besides, it would offend the religious people.

"Anyway, there is probably a law against singing on the top of St. Paul's. You really must contradict it.

"In any case I do not wish Baba Letoile to have her chances spoilt by advance publicity. When she has shown us what she can do, we will be able to help her. Not that she will need much help, because all the Spaniards have taken seats to give her the biggest claque . . ."

"Claque?"

"Yes, darling." Irela spelt it for her. "That's what they call the people who are paid to applaud . . . Do go on, and don't interrupt."

"the biggest claque that's ever been heard in England."

She shuffled among the letters. "Bills . . . bills . . . heaven knows how I shall pay them . . . That'll have to do now, darling. Get on with those. We have to be at the theatre soon after eleven."

"That will be thrilling!"

"No, it won't," she snapped. "It'll be dull. There'll be nobody there, because the Italians only arrived yesterday and they'll all be asleep. I only want to see how they've set the stage for 'Boheme.'"

AN embarrassing incident occurred before they were able to enter the theatre.

When they passed through the entrance into the lounge, Irela looked round her and frowned.

"Those pictures!" she cried. "Madness, to stick them up like that, in those horrible patterns."

Pauline looked at the objects she indicated. They were large square posters, in bright colors, indicating scenes from various operas.

"Come on. We'll move them."

Pauline hesitated. "Do you think," she began, "that we ought perhaps to ask if . . . ?"

"Ask whom?" Irela, who was already beginning to shift one of the posters, stood erect. "Whom should we ask? Haven't I got the lease of this theatre?" She regarded Pauline indignantly. "I hope you don't mean that I should ask somebody's advice on a matter of taste?"

"Good heavens, no!"

"Then please come and help me move this one. They're terribly heavy."

Pauline helped her. Irela groaned and panted, her pearls swung out and became entangled in the frames, the ospreys on her hat were powdered with plaster, her gloves were dirtied by the dust, but she was evidently enjoying herself. "How like a child she is!" thought Pauline. "Nobody could possibly believe that this is the great, awe-inspiring prima donna."

Soon they had moved most of the pictures to one side of the wall. It never seemed to occur to Irela to call an attendant. She was just turning round to attack another group when a smart-looking young man stepped forward.

"Just a minute, please."

"What is it?" she asked impatiently.

He smiled somewhat perkily. "I think I should ask you that."

"I am Madame Irela," she panted. "These posters . . ."

"I am Mr. Vernon's secretary," said the young man calmly. "I'm afraid I cannot authorise you to move them."

"Really!" She rolled the "r" with dragon-like ferocity. "Really, I don't think you quite realise. . . ."

"I'm very sorry, Madame Irela," he said, as calmly as ever. Then, as though to appease her, "What was it you disliked about them?"

She was still panting. "They're impossible in that position. They're hideous enough in themselves, but when you stick them out against the wall at right angles . . ."

"Some people might like them in that position."

"Some people!" she shrilled. "Are you talking to 'some people'? Do you know who you are talking to?"

He was evidently beginning to realise, for his eyes shifted restlessly and his face grew a little pale.

"Why . . . of course, . . ."

"How dare you talk to me like that? Were you never taught manners at school? Do you know that you have one hand in your pocket?"

He took it out quickly. He gulped some inaudible reply.

"How old are you?" she demanded.

"Twenty-four, madame."

"And you dare to come and dictate to me? Really, I think it's a little extraordinary! I do, indeed!"

He did not reply.

Irela gave him a final glare. "Tell Mr. Vernon from me," she said, "that those posters are to be kept hung straight, as I have moved them. If they are placed in any other position, they will go altogether, and he'll have to buy new. And if he does buy new, they'll come out of his pocket. Good morning to you!"

She swept down the staircase. Pauline, glancing shyly back at the young man, saw that he was wiping his forehead with his handkerchief, and that he looked exceedingly distressed.

THE day was yet young.

When Irela went down the stairs she expected to see a darkened auditorium, a stage set for the first act of "Boheme," and various underlings who would do her bidding. True, there was no rehearsal of "Boheme" for two days, but she had a vague idea that, in view of the importance of the event, the stage would be set. After all, the scenery was here, the stage-hands were engaged, so why not?

What she was entirely unprepared to see was what she did see. Which was a stage empty of scenery, but occupied by various men and women who were singing to the accompaniment of a full orchestra.

She paused in the doorway. "What on earth . . ." she exclaimed. Then she turned to Pauline, and spoke in an angry, excited voice:

"There's some trickery here. They're rehearsing the 'Barbiere.' They never told me . . . it's disgraceful . . . with a full orchestra, too . . . you see? There's Sovino conducting . . . the little man with a face like a rat. There's trickery, I tell you, and I believe it's Kober who's responsible. I'm beginning to distrust that man. Where is he? Ah . . . here he comes."

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He came towards them through the darkened stalls. He bent down to kiss her hand, but she snatched it away.

"Who called this rehearsal?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"It wasn't you?"

"Dear lady, I can't call rehearsals. I'm only a 'rolling stone.' You'd better ask Vernon. He's the manager of the Irela syndicate, isn't he?"

There was something almost insolent about his tone.

"Don't be a fool. What's the use of asking Vernon? He never has the least idea about anything. I think it's monstrous. We've only got a limited amount of money to spend on rehearsals, and here they are doing the 'Barbiere,' which isn't being given for another six weeks."

"Judging from the performance they're giving, they seem to want a rehearsal pretty badly."

"That's got nothing to do with it. What about me? What about 'Boheme'? I tell you it's monstrous."

Again he shrugged his shoulders.

"Is that Baba, sitting on that box?"

"Yes."

Irela put up her lorgnettes. She saw a completely round bundle of young Spanish womanhood. At the top of the bundle was a round white face, which appeared to have no nose . . . only two round black eyes and a round purple mouth.

"God! How old is she?"

"She admits to twenty-five."

"What'll she be like in another ten years? Heavens! She's standing up. And it makes no difference at all. She's rounder than ever. My dear! What is to be done with her? She's far worse than Tetrazzini! Really . . . she'll be a laughing-stock. We'll lose money on her. . . ."

But there was a strangely gratified expression on Irela's face which was difficult to associate with the thought of financial loss.

"Ah . . . she's going to sing."

And then the gratified expression died away. For Baba's voice was good, far too good. Nobody but a fool would attempt to compare it with Irela's. It was the voice of a bird, whereas hers was the voice of a spirit. But it was the voice of a very agile bird, clear, strong, and of immense compass. It was, moreover, a young voice . . . it burbled with joie de vivre.

Irela kept up a running commentary while Baba sang the somewhat disjointed phrases which the lazy Rossini prepared for Rosa.

"She sings her top notes too loud," she said. "They all do. All those people. She'll have no voice left at all in ten years.

"She'll have corns on her vocal cords," she continued. "Heavens! I shouldn't wonder if she'd got them already! Listen to that top D. Why does she want to put in a top D? It isn't in the score."

"It's very effective," said Kober.

"Don't be a damned fool, Kober. Do you and she know better than Rossini? I never sang top D when I sang it, and I could have sang top F, as you know very well."

"My dear . . . nobody could possibly compare her with you. . . ."

"I should hope not," she snorted. "And why has she left out the trill? Eh?" She leant forward like a hound on the scent. "Why has she left out the trill? Hasn't she got a trill?" She spoke as though she were a doctor discovering the absence of some vital organ in the body of his patient.

"I really don't know."

"You don't know? And you engage . . . or help to engage . . . a woman to sing the 'Barbiere' who hasn't got a trill? What's she going to do in 'Lucia,' I'd like to know? The 'mad scene' will go to hell if she hasn't got a trill. And what about 'Rigoletto'? Have you forgotten what I used to do at the end of the second act . . . starting the trill at the bottom of the staircase and keeping it up right along the gallery until I got into the wings? Really . . ." She made a gesture of impatience, but again there was a certain expression of gratification on her face at the thought of Baba's grave defect.

"My trill," she observed, without a trace of self-consciousness, "is unique. Everybody knows that. I'm not asking her to have a trill like mine. I've had mine photographed on the audometer, and it stretched across thirty feet of film and was absolutely even all the way across. Heavens, she's trying to do a trill now. . . . Oh, really . . . it sounds as if she were tight. . . . You must see the difference. . . . Listen, Pauline."

And here, to Pauline's great dismay, Irela proceeded to trill, softly but quite clearly, so that it was heard throughout the theatre.

The inevitable happened. Sovino threw down his baton, and turned towards them, running his hands through his hair and shouting fierce words in Spanish. At the same moment Baba screamed, sat down heavily on her sugar-box, and also shouted fierce words in Spanish. The orchestra stopped, with an ugly, irregular jerk, like a bus whose brakes are jammed too quickly. Everybody began to jabber. Pauline heard Kober saying hurriedly to Irela, "You see . . . they didn't know it was you. . . . It was just the fact that we were talking. . . ."

"Really . . . I've never heard such nonsense."

"I'll explain." Already he was hurrying down the gangway. Irela followed with Pauline. There was a moment's silence, and then Kober was speaking in fluent Spanish, with a great many references to Irela. "Irela!" echoed Sovino, somewhat quikily. "Irela!" cried Baba, springing from her sugar-box. In a moment everybody was on the stage being presented.

"So sorry," beamed Irela. "Me permite—" Her Spanish was terrible, but they brightened when they heard it.

THERE was an awkward pause . . . one of those pauses where life seems tense because of its very immobility —when a moment is crystallised into an eternity.

They faced each other . . . the tiny round woman with the smooth cheeks, and the proud old woman with the wrinkled neck. On Baba's finger was an immense yellow blister pearl which looked like a child's toy, on Irela's bosom glowed three magnificent ropes of pearls. Baba's coat was of cheap mink, Irela's of sumptuous sable. Behind Irela stood Pauline and a dozen obsequious small-part men, and stage hands. Behind Baba stood only . . . Kober. And yet Pauline was struck with a sudden chill . . . she had a feeling that she was standing at the foot of a throne that was trembling in the balance. It was as though Irela were rising proudly, in some ancient court, to receive the obeisance of a subject who was, in reality, a conqueror . . . a Roman empress receiving a deputation of barbarians. . . . Oh, enough of these metaphors. She felt them to be unprofitable. And she hoped that they were without foundation, for Baba said:

"I shy . . . very shy . . . to seeng before Irela."

Irela laughed artificially. "Isn't she sweet?" she said, turning to Pauline. "When she has sung so beautifully?" She laughed again and said to Baba, "We must be great friends . . . grande amigos . . . yes?"

"Si . . . si," cried Baba, clapping her hands.

"And Signor Sovino too," added Irela. "You are to conduct for me in 'Boheme'."

Sovino assented, with so little display of enthusiasm that another awkward moment might have ensued had not Kober stepped forward and explained to Sovino that Irela had been a personal friend of Puccini. This information impressed Sovino greatly, with the result that he muttered a few phrases about honor and felicity, which gave Irela an opportunity to make her adieux with a certain grace.

When they left the theatre the rehearsal was again in full swing. Pauline had a curious sense that they had been dismissed, as though they were intruders.

Irela sat in the car, clutching the sable rug, staring straight in front of her.

"She's not a bad little woman," she said.

"No. . . . I thought she was rather a dear."

"All the same, I don't like the look of things."

"Oh, you mustn't upset yourself . . . please . . . I'm sure . . ."

"It's that man Kober," said Irela. "I'm not sure whether he's to be trusted."

"But he adores you!"

"Kober never adored anyone. He adored my voice, because he's an artist. . . . I'll grant him that . . . but now . . ." Her lips set in a grim line, and her voice rose. "Oh, he's like all Russians . . . always with an eye on the main chance . . . ready to sacrifice anything for money."

She laughed bitterly. Then she looked Pauline straight in the eyes, and in a voice that did not tremble, she said, "He thinks I'm finished, Pauline. He thinks the end has come. You mark my words! He's like a rat deserting a sinking ship." She smiled . . . not a pretty smile. "He's making the biggest mistake of his life. For I'm not sinking. . . . No, Pauline. I'm not sinking yet!"

CHAPTER 4.

DONALD GAGE was one of those extraordinarily agreeable young Americans who combine exceptional good looks with a gaiety of spirit which has in it more of the tradition of Merrie England than most Englishmen would care to admit. For nobody, of late, has been sufficiently optimistic to attribute any merriment to the England of to-day, and only a few persons have been honest enough to grant that if the tradition lingers anywhere, it is in America—yes, though the laughter may be accompanied by the tinkle of a cocktail shaker instead of by the stirring of the wassail bowl, though the songs may have a brooding negro timbre instead of an earthy, Saxon tang.

He was "merry" . . . a beautiful word, delicate and vibrant . . . fresh as spring leaves. Merry even when there was no possible logical reason for merriment. Even on this exceptionally dreary morning, when we renew his acquaintance, some ten days after the episode of the camera, he was merry.

He was clothed in a vest and pants, and he looked exactly like those "Saturday Evening Post" advertisements for young gentlemen's underwear which cause such peculiar sensations to throb in the breasts of otherwise adamant American matrons. Cause them, indeed, to turn to the back pages with a girlish enthusiasm which cannot be entirely explained by their anxiety to discover how the serial ends. Cause them, sometimes, to sigh, and close their eyes, and think bitter thoughts about the town's Bad Rich Women, who go to Europe and swoon all along the Riviera in the arms of obliging gigolos. Cause them, ultimately, to open their eyes, gaze with distaste upon their large-paunched husbands, and bid them a snappy good-night, prior to going up to their bedrooms to put an extra screw into their chin-straps, and an extra dab of cold cream round the corners of their eyes.

He stood looking out of his bedroom on the top floor of a lodging-house in Half-Moon St., and he thought, "Gee, what a climate! Gee, what a city! Gee, what a nation!" He was quite justified in thinking these things. A peculiarly obscene fog was in the process of descending upon London. Already, although it was only ten o'clock, a twilight gloom was obscuring

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the street outside. The chimneys on the opposite houses were barely visible through the yellow haze—one could just see that they were belching melancholy fumes to the desolate air. The street below was quite invisible. One looked down, merely, into a cold, misty hell, through which the street lamps glimmered, like sickly primroses. The fog was creeping through his window, although it was tightly closed, making his eyes smart and his throat sore. Yet, in spite of this typical display of the English climate, he was merry. Actually, he laughed! He said to himself:

"Well—it doesn't make any difference whether my camera's bust or not—not to-day, it doesn't!" After which crude statement, he lapsed into thought.

That old Irela! That blasted old madame! Gee! He should have done something about that. The dirty old . . . He pursed his lips, and scratched his naked knee. Mustn't use bad language about a lady. But say, did you ever hear anything like it? He'd a good mind to bring an action against her.

Then he laughed again—quite naturally and heartily. Bring an action? What chance would he stand? With thirty pounds in the world? No, twenty-five, because the rent was due to-day. No, fifteen, because he owed for that overcoat. No, ten, because . . . no, five, because, no . . . hell . . no, nothing at all, because he had to pay for the old camera, and that would be . . . gee, why didn't he sue the old . . . ? And then he really did say the bad word, because he was not used to doing his financial accounts so thoroughly, and he had not realised quite the fix he was in.

There was only one reason, he admitted to himself, why he had not taken a firmer stand, made some sort of claim. And that was because of the girl. He saw her now, in his mind's eye, by that old woman's side, pale, all in black, with parted lips and eyes like stars. She certainly had nothing to do with it. She was sorry for him. He was sorry for her, too, having to stay with an old woman like that. Or perhaps she wasn't staying with her? He wondered, for the hundredth time, if she would answer the letter he had posted last night. . . .

Then the telephone rang.

IN a room not a mile away . . . a room with exquisite Italian chairs and pale grey toile de Jouy curtains . . . Pauline stood with Donald's letter in her hand. She, being female, and a secretary, was fully dressed in spite of the early hour. For Irela had demanded her assistance before breakfast was over . . . demanded it so fully and tyrannically that Pauline, for the first time since her arrival, had been a little put out . . . had realised, with a sudden shock, that Irela was being just a tiny bit tiresome. As soon as the thought entered her head, she quelled it as ungrateful, mean, and generally despicable. Still, it had entered her head. And with it had come more general reflections.

"Everything's so old around me . . . everything and everybody . . . so terribly old."

She thought how strangely her life had suddenly changed . . . how she was becoming obsessed, for example, by the fear of draughts . . . how she peered round anxiously to see that the windows were shut, that the screen was in the right position, that the rug was properly adjusted . . . she who, in all her girlhood, had never cared how fiercely or unwontedly the cold winds of the North blew about her.

And the conversation! Always its theme was cast in the past tense, an Edwardian echo tinkled eternally through its rhythm . . . and often the funeral bell tolled through its periods. "Ah! Will there ever be another woman like Gladys? And do you remember the parties Alfred de Rochschild used to give at Hackett? And Plancon! When will the world ever give us another Plancon? They talk about Chaliapin, but . . ." Thus it went, to the accompaniment of withered hands that fluttered aimlessly, fluttered beseechingly, like tired birds which had flown to a land too cold and too swift.

Pauline stood at her window, looking down the fog-choked street, so sour, so desolate, so damned, and she said to herself, "I want youth . . . I want it terribly, just for a little while."

And she had it in her hand.

She read Donald Gage's letter, for the tenth time.

"Dear Miss Joycey,

"I hope you will excuse me for writing to you. I am the photographer who unfortunately offended Madame Irela at the station the other day. Perhaps I ought to write to her, but I write to you because you seemed a little more sympathetic.

"I am very bad at expressing myself, and really all I wanted to say was that I was sorry if I caused you any annoyance. It was all rather a shock to me. Still, I would love to get a photograph of Madame Irela . . . and I would guarantee it to be O.K.

"It is hopeless when I try to write. I can't say what I want. But I do want you to know that I would be very happy to hear that you were not offended. It would give me great pleasure if I might be privileged to see you again one of those days. I learnt that you are a Canadian, and in England for the first time, and I guess we might have something in common.

"This letter is dull, fresh, and generally awful. I talk much better! My phone number is Gerrard 9216 if you would ever honor me by calling up.

"Sincerely,

"Donald Gage."

"Dull, fresh, and generally awful!" There was a boyish tang about those adjectives which Pauline found irresistible. She lifted the phone.

DONALD went to the telephone a little dubiously. He did not for a moment associate the ring with Pauline. It was far too soon. Therefore, his face registered only pained suspicion. He distrusted English telephones. Sometimes they electrocuted you, sometimes they split your ear-drums, usually they just infuriated you with a vague, distant clamor, through which there drifted the voices of incredibly genteel maidens, who were always lamenting the fact that you had been "tr-r-roubled." But to-day, strangely enough, the voice was clear and sweet.

"Is that Mr. Gage?"

"Sure. Who is it?"

"My name is Pauline Joycey. I was with Madame Irela at the station the other day. You . . . you wrote to me."

"Oh!" His lips parted in a slow, delighted grin. He rubbed his naked toes together. "Oh!" he repeated, "Is that so?" Then, very anxiously and suddenly, "Are you there?"

"Why yes, I'm here!"

He breathed a sigh of relief and sat down on the edge of the bed. "You see, these damned English telephones—pardon me—I mean you never know when they're going to cut you off. So, you got my letter!" He closed his eyes, and swayed slightly on the bed.

"Yes. Thank you very much." The voice trembled slightly.

Astounding and fantastic manifestation of Nature! Baffling, bewildering example of the power of chemical attraction! Over a sensitised wire two human animals were making sounds at each other, and in the tangled echo of those sounds, love was being born! Perhaps, indeed, it had been born already—at first sight—for there is no other sight in love—perhaps it needed merely some faint connection, even a telephonic connection, to awaken it again. The fact remains that these two persons, Pauline, standing trembling in Irela's music-room, with her eye on the door, and Donald, sitting shivering in his cold bedroom, with his eyes half-closed, were indulging in a love chant as authentic as the cooing of any doves on any summer's eve.

"Say," he said, after a pause that was deliciously expectant to them both, "I've been wanting to get into touch with you for a long time."

"Have you?"

"Why, yes. I wanted to . . ." he paused. What did he want to do? He could hardly say that he wanted to kiss her. So he said, a little lamely, "I wanted to apologise."

"Oh!" came the voice from the other end. "But that's what I wanted to do. About your camera. You see, I'm Madame Irela's secretary."

"I see." He sounded a little disappointed. "So you really called up on her account?"

"Well, not exactly for her. She doesn't know I'm ringing up. I . . . I just wanted to say I was sorry, and I'm sure she would be, too, if she realised . . ."

"Gee!" He was all smiles again. "If that isn't the nicest thing. Say, have you got a luncheon appointment any place?"

"I'm afraid . . ."

"Well, to-morrow, then?"

"I'm afraid . . ."

"Say, don't go on saying you're afraid. There's nothing to be afraid of." A pause. Then, in a very low voice, "I'd like to see you terribly."

Pauline clutched the telephone to her breast. She felt shot through with pangs of exquisite pain. She was absurd, crazy, but his voice . . . oh, his voice . . . what was she to do?

What she did was to go quite mad. She said, "I'll lunch with you to-morrow."

Donald, after a whoop of delight, fixed the Ritz at one. As he rang off he reflected that, if he pawned his watch, he would be able to give her anything she chose from the menu. If he did not pawn his watch they would have to lunch table d'hote. He decided to pawn his watch.

"MAD!" repeated Pauline to herself, as she stood there, tapping the telephone receiver with the tips of her fingers. "Quite mad!" While she had been talking to Donald the room had seemed filled with his presence. But now—oh, now it was very decidedly filled with Irela. It was not only that photographs of her, in every conceivable attitude, covered the walls . . . photographs taken (or perhaps we should say "carved") by Mr. Loope. It was rather that her presence seemed to permeate the very air, intensely alive and violently possessive.

What was she to do? She was going to lunch with him to-morrow. That was a fact that she accepted as quite inevitable. She did not know why it was a fact, but it was. However, it was also a fact that if Irela knew she was even going to see him at all—this monster who had so grossly offended her—Irela would die of anger and mortification.

She began to talk to herself—a habit which grows upon all "companions," sooner or later, whether old or young. She said:

"Could I say I've been asked to lunch by a relation? But what relation? Irela knows I haven't any relations. She'd start climbing up family trees, and asking terrible questions.

"Could I just say—quite casually—that I'd rather like to lunch by myself for a change?" But the idea of saying anything "quite casually" to Irela was so fantastic that she dismissed it instantly. If you said anything "quite casually" to her, she asked you to "speak up," which meant that you assumed a nervous shout, and there was something extremely unconvincing in the phrase, "I thought I should like to lunch by myself for a change," if

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you had to bellow it at the top of your voice. Irela would say, "Why did you think so?" To which there would be no reply.

She was absolutely without plans. For the moment she gave it up. She went downstairs. The day proceeded like a melancholy dream.

Then, in the middle of her agitation, when things seemed at their very darkest, God came to her aid—as He will, at rare moments, in life as well as in fiction. For Irela, at tea that afternoon, looked up and said to her:

"I've got to lunch with the Windermeres to-morrow. You'll have to look after yourself."

It was as though a flock of sunbeams had lighted upon Pauline's face. But she kept her head. She said, "They're charming, aren't they?"

"The most fearful bores in London," snapped Irela. "I've a good mind not to go."

The sunbeams fled. Pauline said nothing. "However," added Irela, "she always takes a box for the whole season, so I suppose I must. Why she takes a box, Lord only knows. She can't tell 'God Save the King' from 'Rule Britannia,' and snores like an ox all through 'Boheme.' Still . . . one's got to be polite."

Pauline was trembling violently. "I think it's wonderful," she said, "the way you put yourself out."

Irela looked slightly appeased. "Oh—it's business," she answered airily. "I've been at this game too long not to know that an opera season isn't all art. Not by a long chalk." She looked at Pauline.

"What'll you do to-morrow?"

Pauline, with extraordinary daring, said, "I might lunch out." She added quickly, "It would give the cook a rest."

Irela nodded approvingly. Pauline was really very sensible. It was an excellent thing that the cook should be given a rest, always provided that she used the rest to good effect, in order that she might arise, refreshed, to work new enchantments with her art.

"Quite right." She beamed at Pauline. "If I were you I'd go to Soho. They say there are some charming places there."

"Yes," said Pauline. "Perhaps I might." She would not have been at all surprised to hear, at that moment, the crowing of a cock.

THEN, the next day, the blow fell. In after years Pauline called it—since it was the first of many—the First Putting Off.

For as they started out for their morning drive at eleven o'clock Irela said:

"I'm not lunching with the Windermeres after all. So you can have lunch with me at home."

"What?"

"Don't shout at me like that, darling. And please don't tug at the rug. Look! You've pulled it right off my knees. What is the matter?"

"Nothing . . . oh, nothing." Pauline felt as though she were in an express that was driving her to destruction. "I only wondered why you had changed your mind."

"I can't be bored, that's all. Life is too short. Why should I sit with an old woman and try to amuse her?"

Pauline tried to smile. The same question might have sprung to her own lips.

Irela regarded her hungrily. "I must have youth round me," she said, "to give me vitality. To take me out of myself. All these old people sap me . . . sap me! When I'm with young people, why . . . it's like food and drink to me."

Pauline could have sworn that Irela licked her lips, as though she were actually drinking young blood. It was a horrible thought, and it soon vanished, for her whole mind was bent on trying to discover some way to let Donald know in time. Had it been anyone else with whom she was lunching she might have risked Irela's wrath and told her. In the circumstances she dared say nothing. She could only hope that they would get home in time for her to telephone to him before he had gone out.

But everything seemed to conspire against her. Irela was in one of her most difficult moods. She had brought out some letters to read in the car, and she tore them open so carelessly that the envelopes fell all over the floor. It was impossible to pick them up without disturbing the rug, and each time that Pauline bent forward Irela scolded her for being so clumsy. She handed her two or three letters at a time, issuing such vague and hurried instructions that Pauline, even if her mind had not been wandering, would have found it impossible to keep pace with her.

PAULINE had a miserable lunch. They did not return to Charles Street till after one. She could not get Donald on the telephone. There was no reply to his number. And there was no means by which she could send him a note. As she sat at the table with Irela she seemed to see Donald sitting in the hall of the Ritz, kicking his heels, . . growing more and more impatient . . . eventually giving her up as a bad job. It was only half-way through lunch that she remembered she might have telephoned to the Ritz itself and left a message. She cursed herself for her inefficiency. It was too late now.

Meanwhile she trembled at the thought that he might telephone to the house. Irela always liked to go to the telephone herself. But he did not telephone. As the hours drew on she began to fear the worst. Was he so offended that he would never approach her again? Had there been some dreadful accident? She telephoned him from her room. He was still out.

It was not till nearly six o'clock, after endless assurances from various telephone operators that there was no reply, that she at last found him.

"Say . . . what happened?" His voice was the voice of a rather sulky little boy.

"Oh . . . I can't tell you how sorry I am . . . how terribly sorry . . . you see . . ." And then she explained.

"But why should you have told her? You needn't have said it was me."

"She would have wanted to know. . . . Oh, you don't understand."

"No, I don't."

For a terrible moment she feared that he was going to ring off. Then it was as though a smile crept into his voice. He said softly, "Yes, I do."

"Oh, I do hope so, I do indeed. I wouldn't have had this happen for the world." Then, nervously, she laughed. "Isn't all this funny?"

"What?"

"You and I. We've only seen each other once, and yet . . ."

"Yes?" He spoke very eagerly. "Now, come on, you can't hang up on that."

"I was only going to say I feel as if I'd known you for years."

"Same here. All the same, I'm beginning to wonder if I ever am going to see you again."

"Oh, dear. It is difficult."

"Nothing's difficult, if you want it badly enough."

"It's easy for you to say that. You're free."

"And you're a prisoner . . . a captive princess. . . ."

"No . . . no . . . you mustn't say that." She clutched the telephone nervously. "It's only that . . . oh, I can't explain. But may I ask you a favor?"

"Sure."

"Don't make any luncheon engagements for the next three days. I'm sure I shall have one day free. But I shan't know till the last minute. So may I telephone you again?"

She could telephone him all day and all night, he said. And they continued to talk, over that enchanted wire, for a long while, until they were talking themselves into a dangerous state of emotion.

CHAPTER 5.

IF you are, for the first time in your life, both in love and in the Ritz, you will presumably be deeply moved. Many odd emotions will surge within you.

Fear was the dominating emotion in Pauline's breast as she walked into the lounge three days later. Irela had suddenly decided to stay in bed. Donald, true to his word, had been waiting at the end of the telephone. And here they were! But still Pauline could not feel quite secure. Would Irela suddenly leap upon her from behind one of those enormous palms? Was her hat—a pretty affair of crimson straw—was her hat on straight? Would everybody know that she had never been to the Ritz before? Above all, would Donald think her an awful bore?

She need not have asked this last question if she had only looked into his eyes, as he sprang to greet her from the depths of a brocaded chair. But she dared not look into his eyes. She was afraid of betraying herself. Besides, for the moment, she was more overwhelmed by the people around her than by Donald himself. Meals with Irela were alarming enough, with their confusing dishes, their array of wines, and obscure talk, which she could never properly follow. Irela, however, was at least a relation. Irela knew that she must not expect either brilliance or sophistication from Pauline. Whereas, these people . . .

They drank their cocktails somewhat formally. She sat very erect, and tried to smoke a cigarette as though she did not loathe it, and darted alarmed and somewhat piteous glances at Violet, Duchess of Rutland, who was evidently enjoying herself, and seemed, indeed, quite at home. Donald thought, "Hell—she's sore about something. Hell—she's prettier than ever. Hell—she's a peach."

Both were feeling terribly shy. The conversation was far too stilted to be recorded. Let us therefore follow them in to lunch.

Pauline, as she rose to her feet, was mainly determined to show that she was entirely at ease. And therefore she walked into the restaurant proudly. She cast haughty stares at the food on people's plates. She glared icily at the fat necks of the women who floated by her. She curved her nostrils in tremendous disdain at white-moustached gentlemen. She darted fierce glances at waiters hurrying towards her, that she might quell them if they attempted to bar her way. She was like a young Boadicea advancing relentlessly, in a fiery chariot, through ranks of enemies.

That, at least, was the impression she tried to create. Actually she looked like a very shy, pretty girl, making her timid way to the least important corner of the room.

Perhaps Donald guessed something of what she was feeling. For he smiled at her as they sat down, and he said, "Say, just because you're in the Ritz, you needn't get Ritzy with me."

"With you?" She smiled back. "I couldn't be Ritzy with you."

"Couldn't you?"

He leant forward, and put his hand across the table. He upset a vase of carnations.

"Oh! oh!" Pauline whispered to herself. "This is what happens when one misbehaves. We shall be thrown out of the Ritz! Everybody will stare at us! Perhaps they will complain . . . think we are drunk."

But no. Nothing terrible happened. A waiter darted forward, smiling so charmingly that one would think that the only thing that could possibly have made his happiness complete was that Donald should upset the carnations. A flick of the napkin, a little bow, and the disaster was effaced.

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They both looked at one another. And they both looked so grave that Pauline, by the grace of God, suddenly laughed. So did Donald. And she said:

"You know, I've never been in the Ritz before."

"Neither have I."

"What?" It was incredible. "One would think you lived here."

"That's just what I was thinking about you. Didn't you hear me tell you not to be Ritzy?"

"Yes, but . . ."

"Well, I tell you, I'm scared stiff."

At which moment a waiter appeared with an enormous menu. Extremely haughtily, they both ordered lunch. They did not at all care what they ate, and they both ordered far too much. When the waiter had gone, they breathed a sigh of relief. Then they laughed again.

"It's silly, isn't it?" said Donald.

"What?"

"My being here with you. I'd just as soon be any place . . . with you."

She gave him a nervous smile. Then she looked down. It was all heavenly . . . but, oh dear, she did hope he was not going to say anything very embarrassing, at least . . . not just yet.

"Any place," he continued. "From the moment I first saw you . . ."

THEN the waiter arrived with a waggon of hors d'oeuvres. Few things in life are more calculated to cool the passions, to steady the intellect, and to soothe the nerves than the necessity of choosing, from an abundantly loaded vehicle, a suitable assortment of hors d'oeuvres. By the time that they had both chosen (and again, they chose far too much, forcing the waiter to exercise all his dexterity in laying succulent slabs of pimentos on top of piles of sweet corn, without splashing) they both felt more at ease. After they had eaten a little, and marvelled at the fate which had thrown them together, and sighed, and generally broken the ice, she said:

"You know, I oughtn't really to be here at all. Madame Irela . . ."

"Say, is she a holy terror?"

"Really!" Pauline was quite indignant. "She's the greatest, most wonderful woman in the world. Also, she's my aunt. It's just . . ."

"Just what?"

Pauline tried to explain. She told him Irela's difficulties, emphasised the fact that Irela was not so young as she had been. He listened respectfully.

"I understand," he said. He smiled another of his melting smiles at her. "Gee—I like you for that. I like loyalty. That's the first quality in a woman, I guess."

"It isn't loyalty. It's . . ."

He interrupted her. "Well, whatever it is, it's swell. But what we've got to do is to figure out some way that I can come into her life again without having my eyes blacked. By which I mean . . ." and here he twinkled at her, "come into your life."

"Oh, dear!" said Pauline, "I know." She was beginning to blush again. She crumbled a roll, desperately.

"Well, it may interest you to know that I've thought of a way."

"Have you?"

"This is what we'll do, see. I've borrowed another camera from a chap who's gone back to America on vacation. He won't be needing it again for another six weeks. The first picture I'm going to take is one of Irela, in the street, and she won't know I've taken it, see. . . ."

"Oh, but you mustn't." She stared at him, wide-eyed with alarm.

"Say—you don't understand the half of it. You know as well as I do why she doesn't like snapshots . . ."

"Well . . ."

He put his hand on hers. Feeling deliciously abandoned, she allowed it to stay there. "It's because she looks like hell in them, isn't it?"

"Oh!"

"Well, it is. But this one I shall take of her will make her look like heaven. Gee—Greta Garbo'll throw a fit if she sees it, Jeritza'll go into a convent, Lady Diana Cooper will take the first boat out of the country. . . ."

"But how are you going to take it without her seeing?"

"There's a mail-box outside your house."

"How did you know that?"

He grinned. "I've been up and down that sidewalk plenty in the past few days!"

"Oh, really!" thought Pauline. "Honestly!" she whispered to herself.

"I'm going to get behind that mail-box with my camera and take her when she comes out of the house. Now, when does she come out?"

"She goes for a drive every day at eleven."

"Do you go with her?"

"Of course."

He grinned again. "If I'd known that!"

Pauline tried, in great agitation, to prevent the conversation from becoming too personal.

"But you could take it without her seeing?"

"Of course. The point is, what am I going to take? You see, this has got to be a knock-out picture. It's got to have action in it. Now, has she got a dog?"

"No." Irela did not like dogs.

"No pets at all? Not a monkey, or anything like that?"

No, there were no pets. Except a rather grizzled tomcat which lived a peculiar life in the basement, and caused Irela to shriek with horror if it ever showed its whiskers upstairs.

"Say—that's tough. Well, we'll just have to make her laugh, that's all."

"Make Irela laugh?" She trembled at the thought.

"Well, she does laugh, doesn't she?"

"Oh, yes. But . . . not always at the sort of things you'd expect."

Pauline tried as best she could to explain Irela's sense of humor. Donald seemed determined that she should laugh. There was no market, he said, for just an ordinary snapshot of a prima donna stepping into a car. But whenever Pauline repeated stories at which Irela had laughed, he merely looked glum.

"Say, I don't think that's very funny," he would say.

"Neither do I."

Then he clapped his hands together. "I heard a swell story yesterday. Listen. Two bulldogs were walking down the promenade at Brighton. See?"

She nodded. Oh, they were very earnest, very tense, very young.

"Then," continued Donald, "up comes a Pekingese. One of the bulldogs sees the Pekingese and starts to run for its life. When they get out of sight of the Pekingese the other bulldog says, 'Say, why d'you run away from that Pekingese? That Pekingese can't do us any harm.' And the bulldog looks at his friend and he says, 'That Pekingese has got the coldest nose on the south coast!'"

They both laughed heartily at the story—which one admits is a story that should be told by word of mouth rather than in the pages of a book. Then they formulated their plan.

It was decided that on the following day, before Irela took her morning drive, Donald should station himself outside the house, concealed behind the mail-box. Just before they emerged from the house, Pauline was to tell Irela the funny story. By skilful manoeuvres she was to see that Irela got into the right position, still laughing. The photograph was then to be taken, to be developed by Donald himself, and touched up into a thing of ravishing beauty. It was then to be sent to the Press, where Irela would see it, be enchanted by it, send for Donald. . . .

"And," said Donald, lifting his glass, "that's when everybody lives happily ever afterwards."

Pauline felt that the plan was the maddest in which she had ever participated. But she did not care. By the time that they were sipping their coffee, she was deeply in love.

SHE spent a restless night. She was haunted by the thought of the story, whether Irela would laugh at it, whether Irela would notice Donald behind the mail-box, whether she herself would remember the story. "Two bulldogs," she kept on saying to herself, as she lay staring at the ceiling. "One Pekingese. Coldest nose. How awful if I say one bulldog and two Pekingese! How awful if I forget the bit about the nose! And then, to time it properly . . ." Oh, it was all very distracting.

The next day, by the grace of God, was bright and sunny. Pauline was in a fever of agitation, which she could hardly conceal from Irela. She kept looking out of the window, to see if there were any clouds. There was one, of a peculiarly malicious design, which appeared to be bent on doing its worst, stalking the sun as a cat stalks a mouse, never quite reaching it, but stretching a long white paw dangerously near.

"You seem very restless, darling."

She turned to Irela. "Do I? It's such a lovely day—perhaps that's why."

"Well, we'll be going out in a minute."

"Oh, of course." Pauline was elaborately casual. "I'll go and get ready."

She went upstairs. Bulldogs — Pekingese —it was too agitating. Would it not be better just to laugh gaily herself—at nothing—in the hope that Irela might join in? But no—Irela would think she had gone mad. Why should Irela laugh, anyway? But Donald had determined on a laughing picture. She would do her utmost to help him get it.

Heavens! It was nearly eleven. She pulled on her hat, dabbed some powder on her nose, and ran downstairs.

The front door was open. John was helping Irela on with her coat. Now . . . now was the vital moment. She stepped forward, and, somehow, by a violent effort of the lungs, achieved a fairly convincing laugh. "Oh, dear!" she cried . . . "I've just remembered such a funny story . . ."

"Where's my damned bag, Tremlowe?"

This was a terrifying, utterly unsuspected development. However, Tremlowe produced the bag, and Irela, drawing her furs round her, said, "What did you say?"

"A funny story," bleated Pauline.

"Yes? Yes? Tell me . . . tell me." She spoke as though she were inquiring about relatives in a railway accident.

"Two bulldogs," began Pauline.

"I know it," snapped Irela. "It's the Scotch bulldog and the Irish bulldog, isn't it?" She turned to go.

"Oh, no, it isn't!" She almost wailed the words.

"Well?" Irela turned again. Then she spoke to Tremlowe. "Why isn't the car here? Where's Dingley? What's happened?"

"It's still only two minutes to eleven," ventured Tremlowe.

"He ought to be here. Shut the door." She glared at Pauline. "Go on with your funny story."

"Two bulldogs," she repeated.

"Yes, yes. You said that before."

"Were walking down the promenade at Brighton."

"Why?"

"Why?" echoed Pauline. She was almost in despair. "Why?"

"Yes, why?" Irela tapped her foot impatiently. "Oh, never mind why, then. Darling, you must learn to tell stories quickly."

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In a sort of delirium, Pauline babbled the story. It seemed that it would never end. Bulldogs, Pekingese, the promenade, the sea, floated before her in a gruesome procession. At the end of every sentence Irela said, "Yes, yes?" in the most disturbing manner. At last she finished.

She looked at Irela, and stretched her lips into a fixed and tremulous smile. Then Irela said, without a sign of amusement:

"Pekingese ought to have cold noses. If their noses aren't cold, it's a sign that they're not well. Didn't you know that?"

"No. I didn't."

"Everybody ought to know it. Didn't you ever keep a dog?"

"No."

"Well, it's the whole point about a dog."

The door swung open. The car was there. Irela fumbled once more with her furs, turned back to say something to Tremlowe, and stepped into the street. Failure, utter failure. Pauline followed her, in the depths of despair. She did not dare to look over to see whether Donald was there. She had failed him. The most he could possibly do was to take a horrible snapshot of Irela with the grimmest expression on her face. He would never forgive her. Everything was at an end.

Then suddenly, without warning, the miracle happened. Irela saw the joke. And Irela laughed. Again and again. She stood on the doorstep, and clutched Pauline's arm, saying, "Oh, I see . . . the coldest nose," and laughed again, "too amusing . . . the big bulldog . . . oh, dear . . ." and laughed again. "It's really too amusing . . . the coldest nose . . . I must tell that to Kober. . . ." For at least thirty seconds she stood there. She might indeed have known that she was posing for her photograph, for she turned this way and that in an ecstasy of amusement.

THE photograph was published the next day. It was splashed right across the middle page of the "Daily Post." It showed Irela as a slim, graceful figure, laughing gaily. Moreover, there was absolutely no tell-tale "mist" round her chin nor her figure, which proved that Donald's artifice was superior even to that of Mr. Loope. The caption underneath was:

"IRELA IN HAPPY MOOD

"What was it that so greatly amused Madame Irela, the world's greatest prima donna, as she went for her drive yesterday morning? A prize of ten guineas will be awarded to the reader who sends the best suggestion."

Irela did not see the photograph till she came downstairs. Then Pauline spread it before her. She screamed with delight.

"My dear, it's perfect! The best I've ever had! Right across the most important page, too! And the 'Post' has over two million readers. But who did it? Where did they take it? I didn't see anybody . . . did you?"

"No," said Pauline, which was perfectly true.

"And you're in it too, darling! It's very good of you!" (The picture only showed Pauline as a vague blur in the background.) "Just the sort of picture of you I've always wanted. It's really too extraordinary. I can't imagine how they took it. And they're offering a prize to the reader who sends the best suggestion . . . what fun! I think I shall send in a suggestion myself. Or shall I tell them what the joke really was? That would be marvellous publicity. . . . Or would all the stuffy people say it was too rude?"

Then the door opened and John appeared.

"A young gentleman has called from the 'Daily Post,' m'lady."

Irela turned to Pauline. It was fortunate that the room was rather dark, for Pauline's face was bright red.

"Here they are already," she said. "They really are most enterprising. Show him in, John."

Donald walked through the door. Irela advanced to meet him, stopped, stiffened.

"You!"

"Madame Irela," he said hurriedly, "I oughtn't to have done it. But I just had to prove I could take a proper picture, and . . ."

"You mean . . . you took this?" She pointed to the "Post."

"Why, sure." Then he looked her straight in the eye, and grinned. "Say, I'd awfully like to know what the joke was. I might win that ten guineas."

Irela capitulated. Instantly, completely. She trotted round the room being forgiving arch, imperious, and babyish by turns. She made "funny" faces and did her imitation of a cock crowing. It was all a little exhausting, but it served its purpose. For, as Donald was going, Irela linked one arm in his and the other in Pauline's, and said:

"We'll make him our Court photographer, shall we?"

"By special appointment to the Queen of Song," said Donald happily.

Irela gave an enchanted laugh. "You must come and see us again," she cried. "Why don't you and Pauline go out together one day? She must get tired of going about with an old thing like me!"

"Darling, how can you?" exclaimed Pauline.

"I can't imagine anybody getting tired of you!" said Donald. There was a bright glint in his eye, and his voice trembled. "But I'd be honored if Miss . . ."

"Joycey."

"If Miss Joycey would come and . . . well, I'm terribly fond of dancing."

"So am I," said Pauline.

"Then dance, darlings, dance! Any time. Just ring up and she'd love to come!"

And Irela, with a final laugh, danced away down the dim corridor.

"Done it!" whispered Donald.

"Done it!" whispered Pauline.

As she showed him out, it seemed to Pauline that a golden haze lit the street, and that the branches of the trees in Berkeley Square were faintly tipped with green.

CHAPTER 6

PAULINE woke up one morning, a few days later, to the sound of the telephone ringing by her bedside. It was Kober.

"I should like to see you as soon as possible."

"About Madame Irela?"

"Of course."

"Well . . . I'll ask her. . . ."

"Please do nothing of the sort. I want to see you alone."

"Oh!" Pauline reflected for a moment. She did not wish to go behind Irela's back. At the same time, it seemed to her very desirable that she should have a talk with Kober, if only to warn him of Irela's growing obsession. In the last day or two she had been worse than ever. "Kober is intriguing . . . he's trying to stab me in the back . . . you'll see . . ." Irela had cried. Something had to be done about it. So she said:

"She is lunching at Richmond to-day, and won't be back till six. If you like to come to tea. . . ."

"I'll be with you at four o'clock." He rang off.

Pauline received him in the music-room. He did not smile at her, did not even shake her hand. He went straight to the fire and stared into it. Mechanically she offered him the tea which John brought. He waved it aside, and followed John with impatient, brooding eyes till he had shut the door and they were alone.

"What has Irela been saying about me?"

"Well . . ." Pauline hesitated. "What had she not been saying?"

"That I'm a liar and a cheat? That I'm intriguing against her? I see by your face that she's said all that! Has she said I'm a murderer yet, eh? Has she?"

Pauline turned away. "Don't be ridiculous," she murmured.

"Is it so ridiculous?" He spoke tensely. Then suddenly he laughed.

"Don't let us get melodramatic. Tell me the worst quite calmly, and I'll try to bear it. I'll even have a cup of tea, if it would help you."

She told him as much as she dared as he stood there. His figure cast a shadow over her, and the rattling of the teacup in his trembling hand made a perpetual strange accompaniment to her words.

She spoke slowly. "She has an idea that you are not . . . loyal to her. She believes . . . I don't know why . . . that you are inclined to support Baba Letoli against her." She looked up at him.

"Go on."

"She seems to imagine that you are spreading rumors that her day is finished . . . Of course, I know it's all absurd." She hesitated. "In fact, it's only when I try to put it into words that I see how absurd it all is. Still, it's just as well that you should know."

"Quite."

"Well . . ." Pauline laughed nervously. "There it is."

Kober was not looking at her. He was warming his hands at the fire. Pauline had a momentary impression of Mephistopheles in the smoke and flame of his first appearance in "Faust." Then he turned towards her and said abruptly:

"Do you want to know why Irela's afraid of me?"

Her voice was quite calm as she answered: "Naturally."

"It's because she's afraid of herself."

"I don't understand."

"Oh, yes, you do."

The firelight danced through the room like a gay, heartless spirit. The logs hissed and hummed. Kober went on:

"It's because she knows I know."

"That you know . . . what?"

"That she's finished."

Pauline rose to her feet. He put out his hand and motioned her back. Instinctively she obeyed.

"Listen, my pretty child." He seemed to be staring right through her. "I'm not a fool. Especially about the things that I love. That's been my tragedy in some ways. . . . I've seen the things and the people I loved more clearly, because I loved them, whereas most people who love a thing . . . or a person . . . are mercifully presented by Providence with a pair of rose-tinted glasses. Providence never acted like that towards me.

"I have loved Irela's voice all my life. It has been my passion. And because it has been my passion, I know it . . . know every tint and shadow, every inflexion, every overtone . . . and her voice is full of overtones. I know her voice far better than she knows it herself. I could tell you . . . in all seriousness . . . what she had eaten for dinner by hearing her sing a single scale. I could tell you if she were going to have a cold long before she guessed it herself. I could tell you . . . oh . . . I needn't go on. . . . I only ask ask you to believe that there is nothing about that voice . . . that lovely sound that has been my life's inspiration . . . that I do not know. I wish to God I knew my own soul as well."

He folded his arms. "Oh—he is right . . . he is telling the truth," thought Pauline, and she trembled for fear of what he was going to say next. But outwardly she was calm. She merely lowered her head in assent.

"And now the voice is going . . . going. . . ." His hand was stretched in front of him, shaking violently. Pauline looked from it to his face. She expected to see distress, pain . . . she was horrified to see a smile, as though he were gloating over some secret.

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HE went on: "Do you realise why the orchestra plays fortissimo during the whole of the love scene in the first act of 'Boheme,' whereas Puccini only marked forte in the score? Because she can no longer take the high notes without using every ounce of her strength! Do you realise why she had cut out nearly a quarter of an hour from the second act of 'Faust'? Because she can't last the course! Have you ever listened to her singing the very first phrase in 'Faust' . . . that marvellous phrase (though it is sugar) where Marguerite appears, and sings: 'Non, monsieur, je ne suis demoiselle ni bele, et je n'ai pas besoin qu'on me donna la main?' People used to come over from Paris in the height of the season merely to hear her sing that phrase. It was the loveliest thing in the world. It is still lovely . . . still, in some ways, incomparable, but it's no longer the same. She has to take four breaths where formerly she only took two. And the end of the phrase, with the low notes, is no longer like a cello . . . it's harsh . . . strained . . . she gets away with it . . . of course . . . with nearly everybody. But not with me.'

"Is that why? Can that be the reason?" She spoke more to herself than to him.

"Of course it's the reason." There seemed to be a sort of exultation in his voice. "Consider what she does. She works over every phrase like a nigger. She sits here in this room, with her pencil, and her spectacles . . . you've seen her . . . you know . . . and she says she's studying. My God . . . she is studying . . . to see how she can pull through . . . how she can fake! She takes volumes of notes . . . you've seen that, too . . . and when she's made up her mind, she trots off to the theatre, and has a heart-to-heart talk with Sovino. That's why these orchestral rehearsals are taking so long. That's why she gave him a diamond pin. And that's why she hates me!"

Pauline looked at him defiantly. "I don't believe it," she said. "She's bigger than that . . . she wouldn't be so petty."

"Wouldn't she?" He spoke with intense bitterness. "Wouldn't you? When you had ruled undisputed for forty years, when you realised that your kingdom was in danger, and that only one man was in the secret . . . wouldn't you hate that one man? If you stood on the stage, still able to work the spell . . . not as you used to work it, but with a tremendous effort and by endless tricks and evasions . . . and you looked out into the dark stalls and saw one man, sitting at the back, who knew exactly what you were doing, and how you were doing it? Wouldn't you hate that one man? Wouldn't you hate me?"

"You sound as if you were glad that her voice is . . . is not what it was."

"Glad? Why not?"

Pauline did not answer him.

"You have a strange sense of silence." He stared into the fire. "Glad?" he repeated. "No, perhaps not that. I may be a bounder and a consumptive and an outcast Bolshevik, but at least I'm an artist. One could hardly be all those things without being an artist. At the same time . . . ." and here he paused . . . "I'm fascinated . . . fascinated."

"That's a horrible word to use about such a thing."

"I get the same pleasure from following the gradual decay of Irela's voice as a surgeon must get from watching the gradual growth of an interesting disease, or a neurologist tracing the slow atrophy of a fine brain. It's actually a scientific pleasure. Every time I hear her I can see a little bit more that's gone—I can see another spot of tarnish on the gold." He smiled. "Oh, yes, it is fascinating."

"How can you . . . how can you?"

"You can't understand. But I've heard Irela when her voice was the voice of God and of woman, too. I've heard when she sang a high C arrogantly, disdainfully! Can you imagine that? It was so easy to her, so natural, so pure and unforced that she had only to open her mouth, and the miracle occurred. I've heard her trill, like a nightingale, on B flat, and waltz around the stage as she sang. I've heard—oh, never mind . . . . But now . . . ."

"I still think her voice the loveliest in the world."

"Don't be evasive." He suddenly spoke very quietly, as though reproving a stupid child. "You're too intelligent to be so depressingly girlish. Do you remember the end of the first act of 'Boheme'?"

"Yes."

"Do you remember the high C at the end?"

"I'll never forget it."

"No. Because it happens to be an A flat."

"What do you mean?"

"Merely that she always has it transposed two tones."

"It's not true!"

"Isn't it? Ask her! No, I shouldn't do that. She'd probably have one of the grosser forms of apoplexy. Ask Piccolo. He has to sing with her. And unless he can sing at least one high C a week he feels like a cow that hasn't been milked."

"I'd rather hear Irela's A flat than anybody else's C sharp."

"Divinely equivocal creature." He purred round her, then paused again in the middle of the room. Once more the marble hand was poised. . . .

"Fascinating!" He seemed to be muttering to himself. "Don't you see? To watch the difficulties she has with her three registers! If she weren't such a wonderful fighter it wouldn't be such fun. But she is. And the cleverest of them all."

Pauline was about to remonstrate, but he checked her. . . . "Oh, it's brilliantly done. I don't deny that three-quarters of the great British public—the public who really like contraltos and caramels—don't notice. They hear the Irela quality, they see the Irela profile, and they're poignantly conscious that their posteriors are reposing upon seats for which they have paid the Irela price. That's quite enough for them. But for me! Oh—you don't know the thrill I get when I hear just that little tiny break—the infinitesimal pause for breath—when I catch a clipped syllable before a high note—when I hear her singing an E flat forte, instead of pianissimo, just because she knows that when she's changing that register she may crack. Even if I were deaf I could tell that all wasn't well—by the lines of her throat, the movements of her mouth—the swelling of her breast . . . God!" He was almost screaming now. "There's nothing like decay. Especially decay of something that you've loved!"

PAULINE stared at him, horrified. She saw him silhouetted there, against the window, with its vista of muddied, violet roofs. She saw the proud, bird-like profile, the palsied hand, all lit by the theatrical glow of a wayward sunset, and she shuddered. Nor was she comforted when gradually the hand dropped to his side, the face turned to her, melted, smiled, and the lips said:

"Does my sadism amuse you?"

She shook her head. Speech had left her.

"Doesn't it? It amuses me."

"I think you're horrible."

"Still the loyal little ally?"

She stood up, and she spoke as quietly and as sensibly as she could. "I can't see the reason," she said, "for this melodrama. You are employed by Irela. You say you are an artist. I should have thought that those two reasons alone would have been enough to cause you to be loyal to her. . . . I can't see why . . ."

"Why?" And now he came toward her, and his words were hissed rather than spoken. "Because she's treated me as dirt all my life! Because she has insulted me all her life! I used to accompany her . . . I've written some of her best songs . . . she's sung them and refused to have my name on the programme. She's used me always and kicked me always! She's laughed in my face . . . pointed her fingers at my ugly nose. . . . That's funny, isn't it? . . . Held up my arm on the concert platform so that everybody could see my shaking hand . . . and when we were alone she's called me a fool and a clown and a . . ."

"Stop! stop!"

Instantly he checked himself. His face set. He held himself erect. Even the palsied hand was momentarily stilled.

"I beg your pardon." The words seemed to come from an immense distance. "You see, I loved Irela. Not as a woman . . . just . . . a Voice . . ."

She walked away from him. She felt she could bear no more. His words followed her.

"Quite hopelessly. Always the clown. Always kicked. And now, I'm released from that. I can only hate."

She stared out on to the darkening street.

"And it seems," he added, "that my turn has come . . . at last."

Still she stared. The street lamps were blurred with a rain that had just begun. The wind had died down, and the smoke rose from the chimneys like waving, beseeching arms. When she turned round again he had gone.

CHAPTER 7.

FOR Pauline, Kober's outburst was the first strand of a network of fears which spread through her daily life, softly, almost imperceptibly. Fear is a strange affliction . . . the only true mental cancer. It is at the root of every complex, and like cancer it is all the more deadly because its cause is so often hidden.

After all, she asked herself over and over again through the crowded days, what had she to fear? Why did she watch Irela so intently, seeking, against her will, some evidence of the decay which Kober had forecast? Why did she tiptoe up the stairs, when she was practising, and listen outside the door of the music-room, trying to catch in the timbre of that hitherto flawless voice some tell-tale echo to find on its silver surface some spot of tarnish?

Why did she realise . . . with a clarity that terrified her, the age, or rather the uniform "elderliness," of Irela's entourage? It was as though she had been at a party where the blinds were drawn, and the revelry ran high, where the laughter was gay and the spirits youthful . . . and then, suddenly, someone had drawn up the blinds, so that the dawn flooded in. And she saw that the faces around her were wrinkled and haggard, that the laughter came from old cracked throats, that it had all been a masque, a cheating masque, played against Time.

She was the only one in Charles St. who had not long ago said farewell to youth. For the men and women who came and went through those doors had all been bent and twisted by time. Their backs might be straight, their waists corseted, their faces bright with to-day's paint, but their minds were already dead, shut up in tombs that were proudly guarded by Edwardian gravestones. In this new, clear light of her understanding there seemed something a little horrible about their sprightliness, and one day, when Irela was giving a party, Pauline had a cris de nerfs in which she visualised these smart, frock-coated old men and these slim, painted old women as a flock of bats . . . black bats flitting through a cemetery. She put her hand instinctively to her hair, and stifled a scream. . . .

It was a perpetual marvel to her that Irela managed to keep up her brilliant

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spirits. Her energy never flagged. Her voice never dimmed. The only way in which she might be said to betray her age was in her obsession about Kober. Pauline, now, was able to understand this obsession. She no longer dismissed it as an incomprehensible freak of an otherwise sane woman. At the same time, there was still something very like madness in the schemes which Irela was evolving in order to thwart him.

"He's got Babs in his pocket . . . he's got Sovino in his pocket . . . they're all in his pocket," she cried one morning, as they went to the theatre for rehearsal. "Why can't somebody do something?"

"Couldn't you pay him off and get rid of him?"

"He'd bring a libel action. Oh—he's the cleverest of them all! And the wickedest! Did you see him strolling about the other day with his hands in his pockets when Sovino was coaching the Italians in 'God Save the King'? Why, even the charwomen who were sweeping the steps stood up, and when they saw that Sovino was going to go on playing it for some time, they went upstairs and got on with some other work until it was finished. But Kober . . . oh, no! He just kept his hands in his pockets. . . ."

She brooded over this for some time. Then she said, "Why can't we get the ex-soldiers to tar and feather him?"

Pauline sighed. There was something so very vague in some of Irela's phrases. She frequently, in her conversation, invoked the aid of "the ex-soldiers" as though they were a small and compact body of men, living in a specified area, capable of being summoned at a moment's notice to avenge the wrongs of the world. She said, "Let us get hold of the ex-soldiers" in the same sort of way that she would have said, "Let us telephone for a fire-engine." This habit arose from the curiously literal quality of her mind . . . a quality which caused her to speak bitterly of "the income-tax man" . . . a phrase which, for her, covered the whole enormous organisation of Britain's machinery of taxation. She saw "the income-tax man" as a single, hostile individual, bent upon her destruction. And she saw Kober as the head of all the forces of evil, invested him with unearthly powers of darkness.

Fear . . . fear . . . it grew on Pauline day by day. And there was indeed reason to believe that some grave clash was coming. No longer was Kober allowed in Charles St. It was even becoming difficult for him to remain in the theatre while Irela was there. Yet, he was artistic director, he was responsible for endless details in every opera, her own not excepted. By subterfuge and tact, Pauline and the management, who fully understood the situation, were able, on most occasions, to keep them apart. But it was very evident that a storm was brewing.

HAD it not been for Donald. . . .

Yet, he had not spoken. He had never told her that he loved her. He had never tried to kiss her . . . never even held her hand. It is true that there had been little opportunity for any of these overtures. All the same, fears now assailed her from this direction also. Was he only playing with her? Did he mean all the charming things which he said, or was he speaking with his lips alone? If only she might know that . . . if only they might have just one evening undisturbed . . . one evening in which she must not always hurry back, because Irela wanted her.

Their chance came a few days later. Irela said:

"I'm tired. I shall dine in my room tonight. Why don't you go out with your young man? Go and dine, and be thoroughly vulgar and go to a talkie." Talkies, to Irela, were still the monopoly of the lower classes.

Pauline, with a singing heart, ran upstairs and telephoned to him. Yes, he was free. And he thought it would be grand to go to a talkie. They would dine somewhere cheap. And would she please be very careful when she crossed the road? And would she please wrap up well because it was a cold night?

As Pauline went out Irela called her back. "Be as late as you like, darling," she said.

"Oh, thank you . . . thank you. . . ."

"But if you do go to a talkie, you might just ring up afterwards . . . if you're going on anywhere . . . in case. . . ."

"In case?" Pauline whispered the words after her. Then she nodded, and kissed her and went downstairs. "In case." "In case" what? Was every pleasure in her life to be qualified by that fatal clause? There was something foreboding about it, and fear again assailed her. But when she stepped into the street, and the keen kind struck her cheeks, she held her head high, and shook away the fears. It was a bright-eyed, radiant creature who greeted Donald.

AS they sat at dinner, Pauline learnt, for the first time, something of Donald's life. It enthralled her.

He had been forced to leave Yale, at the height of a brilliant career, owing to the bankruptcy of his father. He had arrived in New York with the traditional ten dollars in his pocket, and a camera on his back, had refused an easy position with an uncle in Wall St., and had got a job on that most brilliant of all the newspapers that are no more, the "World." Here he had more than lived up to the first Mr. Pulitzer's Great Thought, which used to be printed at the head of the editorial page. One already forgets exactly what the Great Thought was, but it was in the best democratic traditions, and breathed resolution and "forwardness" in every line. So did Donald, with such ardor that he was sacked from the "World" as a disruptive force. Then he went to the New York "Clarion," which fully appreciated his dynamic qualities, but considered that he would be better employed in Europe, with other anarchists. They paid his fare to London, and would have liked to wash their hands of him. But they couldn't. His photographs were far too good.

It was, indeed, with Royalty that he had been most successful.

He had photographed queens from the front (laughing heartily), from behind (laying foundation stones), from sideways (receiving bouquets from perspiring Girl Guides), and from above (descending into coal mines). By a few deft touches to the negative he had accentuated the primeval savagery of the Royal hats, causing these hats, indeed, to cease to be hats at all, but to appear as dark, mysterious symbols of an ancient world. For the domestic magazines he had swollen out their bosoms ("they say she's such a womanly woman"), and caused an extra sparkle to radiate from their necklaces ("they say the Crown jewels are worth five million dollars"). No queen in any American paper looked so truly, so emphatically a queen as when she was photographed by Mr. Donald Gage.

With the kings he had a little more difficulty. The most fervent monarchist could not deny that, with few exceptions, the kings of Europe appeared to have shrunk in the wash. Perhaps this was an example of Nature's instinct for self-protection. Nature, the realist, having observed that the modern king's chief use is to serve as a target for bombs, may have arranged a process of selection by which the target was made as small as possible. Whatever the reason, the kings were very difficult to catch, especially if there were any large dogs about. They had a habit of being swallowed up behind batches of Boy Scouts, or completely obscured by bouquets, or blotted out by the baby at christenings, or lost in the fold of a flag. The best place to take them, Donald discovered, was on the top of a flight of steps. By placing the camera near the ground, and tilting it sharply upwards, a clever distortion was obtained which made them look almost life-size. It was fatal to take them when they were making speeches from balconies, because then only the tips of their moustaches appeared, and the American people at once leapt to the conclusion that they were hiding from bombs, which was bad for European prestige.

All these things, in his quaint American dialect, he explained to Pauline, as they sat together, and she was enraptured.

"It makes my life seem so dull . . ." she complained.

"What—with Irela to look after?"

Again, at the mention of that name, fear seized her and she trembled.

BUT in the movie house, Fear fled before Romance. True, the romance which they felt fluttering around them was more in their own hearts than in their surroundings. The woman next to them was eating caramels with a fierce avidity that caused her to whistle, internally, each time that she stripped a sweet of its paper covering. She had evidently eaten a great many caramels in a great many houses of entertainment, for she had reduced to a fine art the process by which the caramel is extracted from its box, denuded, poised, and popped into the mouth. Never once did she remove her eyes from the screen even when she was making the transition from the first layer to the second. She stared always in front of her, wide-eyed, open-mouthed, and at regular intervals her hand was raised, hovered for a second, and then swooped down, hawk-like, upon its prey. It always hit a caramel square in the middle, and jerked it instantly to the open mouth, which proceeded slowly, rhythmically, to assimilate it, in time to the music.

Donald and Pauline watched her, fascinated. They were sitting very close together now. They were both wondering what the other was thinking, wondering fiercely . . . but meanwhile they were content to watch the caramel woman . . . and they watched her till the end of the box. When the last caramel was eaten they smiled at each other, and then Donald put his hand over hers. Which made them both dizzy with excitement.

This tardy, hesitant love-making may sound extremely Victorian . . . no, that word must be crossed out, for it has been uttered by so many lazy mouths that it is meaningless. Yet it has the right aura about it. And the Victorian aura was very delicately fitted to such love as theirs. Donald and Pauline were not the type who snatch each other in taxis . . . their lips had not searched feverishly for other lips through the smoke and din of cocktail parties. Not that there is anything wrong in that . . . except that searching lips are apt to be seared and numb, and an over-indulgence in taxi-snatching dulls the senses. In fact, many quite young people in this year of grace appear to need the aphrodisiac of an automobile before they are capable of any spiritual or physical declarations. . . . All of which is an inexcusable diversion. . . .

The picture began. It was a very silly picture, though all sorts of Karl Schencks and Otto Spitzenhermers appeared to have busied themselves with its production, the one attending to the screen story, the other to the musical effects, while countless Oscars, Fritzes, Hugos and Wolffs had attended to the other embellishments, such as the choreography, the luminography, and, presumably, the osteopathy, evolving between them a simple tale of Scottish mother love, guaranteed accurate in every detail, down to the last hair in the sporran of the Italian gigolo's kilt. After the audience had been stunned by the customary bombardment of Teutonic names, after a flimsy lion had roared and a very Hollywood sun had risen and set, among a great many more names, and the final ray had flickered out to the final tremulous screech from the tinned organ, the play actually began.

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An abnormally white-haired mother was saying good-bye to a peculiarly black-haired son. She was saying good-bye in the middle of a storm, in the middle of a hut, in the middle of a dinner, and also, apparently, in the middle of the story, for it was all quite incomprehensible. But whether one understood it or not, it was extremely moving, and exceptionally moral. Nobody could possibly take exception to the sentiments which boomed from those grey celluloid lips:

"A mother's love, my son, will follow you."

"Mother o' mine," wheezed the Italian gigolo, turning his Titanic profile, with true Scottish acumen, towards the camera.

"Over hill and dale, through sunrise and sunset . . ."

"Mother o' mine," repeated the gigolo, rolling the "r," and giving an extra Scottish twist to his chin.

Whereupon the picture suddenly switched, with unaccountable speed, to the aforesaid hills, dales, sunrises, and sunsets, through and over which the Italian gigolo, who had somewhere changed his kilt, forged relentlessly, followed always by Mother Love, which was delineated by a misty shape in the top left-hand corner of the screen . . . ("misty shapes by Karl Skunkenboom," murmured Donald to himself).

This exquisite nonsense delighted them for the space of some twenty minutes. Then, delight gave way to something deeper. The love motif began.

"I love you."

"I love you."

Across the screen the grey shapes fluttered, met, and mingled. And by some curious remote alchemy — chemical, spiritual, mechanical, who knows?—their mingling was the signal for many other minglings. In lofty, shadowed galleries, beneath Cupids and smoky Venuses, throughout the length and breadth of this theatre, body drooped to body, hand was linked to hand. And Donald murmured:

"He's saying it for me."

Pauline looked at him with starry eyes. "And she's saying it for me, too."

Whereupon the woman by their side, who had slaughtered numberless caramels with her own jawbone, emitted a startling "Sh!"

They both started violently. They had forgotten that there was anybody else in the world. Then Donald suddenly reached for his hat:

"Let's get out of this," he grunted. "I've got something to tell you."

She followed him up the immense soaring staircase. A thousand eyes seemed to regard her. In her wake boomed the fretful love story whose ghostly echoes they were about to transmute into human vibrations.

THEY stood in the very middle of a vast hall, that looked like a mixture of Ely Cathedral, Madame Alice Foote Macdougall's tea shop and the haunt of the Rhine maidens. Around them stretched wastes of deep piled carpet. Above them towered a roof terrifically gilt. And there, in that desert, they kissed. Whereupon they both laughed, like children who have done something very daring. They retreated to the shadow.

"When did you first know?" he demanded breathlessly.

"Oh, dear. . . ." Pauline was almost crying. "I don't know. When you telephoned, I believe."

"I knew at the station. Didn't you see me raise my hat and smile?"

"Yes . . . I saw."

"The King of England wouldn't have made me raise my hat just then . . . I was so sore . . . but you. . . . Gee, Pauline, this is great, isn't it?"

They held hands. He faced her, his legs wide apart, grinning. "Say something, darling."

"What shall I say?"

"You know what."

"Do I?"

Fantastic, idiotic flirtation . . . not meet to be transcribed. Yet she said as he had commanded. . . . "I love you," and he echoed her words, and their lips met again.

Then he claped his hands together.

"We've got to dance to-night!"

"Oh, we must!"

"We've never danced together . . . and I'm swell!"

"So am I!"

"I could dance with you on the edge of the world!"

"And up into the stars," she laughed. "We can't go on being sentimental."

"Can't we? Try me and see!"

They stood there, in the absurd Gothic hall, and they looked so young and so much in love that the attendant—who was dressed in a costume which combined, with elegant impartiality, the main features of the Pope's guard, the London beefeaters, and the Greek Evzons, spat disgustedly into a Gothic umbrella stand. He had been married ten years, and for him the gilt had worn off love.

"Come on!" cried Donald. "We'll get a taxi and go some place."

And then Pauline remembered. "In case." The phrase rang through her head like a note of doom.

"Yes," she said. Her voice trembled. "Yes," she repeated. But she stood quite still.

"Well . . . what's the matter?"

"It's nothing." She twisted her fingers nervously round the handle of her bag. "I . . . I only promised I'd ring up."

"Irela?"

She nodded.

"What about?"

"She just said . . . 'in case' . . ."

"In case what?" She did not answer him. He was frowning at her. "Say, what's the idea? What can she want with you at this hour?"

"I don't know . . . nothing, I expect?"

"Then why d'you have to call her up?"

"She asked me to . . . she did. . . honestly. . . ."

"I don't doubt she did." His voice was grim. "All the same, I don't see why in hell . . . oh, I'm sorry. But you're not a child, darling. And on this night, of all nights. . . ."

She put her hand on his arm. "I know, Don, I'm sure it'll be all right. She's probably in bed and asleep, long ago. But I did promise. So . . . do you mind?"

How could he possibly mind, when she looked at him like that? He shrugged his shoulders, and kissed his hand to her as she went quickly to the little telephone box in the corner of the hall.

Pauline stood in the tiny telephone box. A brilliant light glared down upon her. There seemed hardly an ounce of air in this curious little cage, and even the few breaths that remained were heavily scented with Chypre. As she lifted the receiver and gave the number she asked herself, "Why is it that the women who use telephone boxes always smell of Chypre? Is it because they are women 'of a certain type'? Are they always making rendezvous with lovers . . . are they invariably strange, homeless creatures who inhabit rooms without telephones, without comfort, with nothing but a bed . . . on which they lie and lie, paying for life and hoping for death?" She closed her eyes. These thoughts were idiotic, morbid . . . born of Chypre and bad air.

THROUGH the scented distance a voice echoed, "Two pennies, please." She groped in her bag. Would she never find the pennies? Ah, here they were! A new one, and an old bent one. One of them with the handsome and imposing profile of King George V, the other bearing only a faint but suggestive three-quarter face of the late Queen Victoria. What would the late Queen have thought of this escapade? What would she have said of girls who stood in immorally scented hutches towards the hour of midnight, preparing to tell falsehoods to their employers . . . especially when those employers were as eminent as Irela?

One, two. The pennies were in. A voice echoed, "You're thr-r-rough." And then, as though from another planet, she heard John saying "Hullo?"

John! She closed her eyes. Almost imperceptibly her slight figure swayed. She felt like some prisoner, on reprieve, who meets by chance in the street the warder who has lately guarded him. During those last few hours she had soared . . . she had been a person . . . an independent human being . . . a unit, free to explore, to drift, to adventure. And now, the voice of John was enough to make her cower again, to make her moisten her lips nervously, and say:

"It's Miss Joycey. Is her ladyship in bed yet?"

"Just hold the line, miss. I'll go and see."

She held the line. For a brief, scared moment she lifted her eyes, and saw Donald watching her. She tried to smile, but she could not. For she knew in advance that she had sealed her own doom. This telephone that she was holding was like the end of a rope which tethered her.

John's voice came through again.

"Are you there, miss?"

"Yes."

"Her ladyship says will you please to come home at once. It's very important, her ladyship says."

"Yes."

She put down the receiver. She stood quite still. It was Donald who opened the door.

"She wants you?"

She nodded. She was almost crying.

"And are you going?

"What else can I do?"

He took her arm. He did not speak angrily. He said, "Oh, Pauline, you poor dumb little thing. Can't you ever do what you want to do?"

"How can I?"

He regarded her thoughtfully. "Gee . . . it seems I've taken on a tough proposition. The girl who can't say no."

"But, Don . . ." There was a desperate note in her voice. "I'm not a free agent. After all, Irela employs me."

"Even servants get a night on sometimes."

"No, no. It's not fair of you to say that. Something may have happened. . . . something dreadful. She said it was very important."

"Perhaps she's lost her spectacles and wants you to read her the evening paper."

"You mustn't say those things. Please, you mustn't."

She led him to the entrance. They stood at the top of the steps, forlornly. They looked very different from the proud, exultant pair that had aroused the envy of the attendant a few minutes before. All the vitality seemed to have been drained from Pauline. She drooped, and her face was white.

"We must get a taxi, I suppose."

They spoke little on the way home. When they said good-bye she clung to him, trembling, her fingers clutching his arms tightly.

SHE knocked at the door of Irela's room.

"Come in."

Irela sat up in bed. She wore her lace cap and her tortoiseshell spectacles. A glass of milk was by her side.

"There you are, darling!"

Pauline stood in the doorway. "What is it?"

"What is what?"

"What has happened?"

"Happened?" Irela spoke somewhat sharply. "Nothing has happened. Only what will happen if you don't shut the door is that I shall catch a cold in the draught."

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Pauline shut the door. "John said it was very important."

"Did he?"

"Wasn't it?"

Irela shuffled her feet under the bed-clothes. "Really my dear, you're behaving very strangely. Has your young man been giving you too much to drink?"

Pauline flushed and said nothing.

"And don't glare at me like that, please darling. I don't think it's very kind of you. Here have I been alone all the evening, feeling wretchedly ill, while you go gadding about with strange young men—not that I complain of that—I'm modern, thank heaven—and when you ring up at midnight . . ."

"It's only half-past eleven now."

"Well, what of it?" she cried. "When do you want to come in? Or did you want to stay out all night?"

Pauline turned to the door. Irela saw the disgust on her face, realised that she had gone too far . . .

"Please, please . . . I didn't mean that . . . forgive me." Suddenly she began to whimper. "I'm upset, overwrought. It was Kober. He rang up, just before you did. He said the bookings for Baba were bigger than for me. He told me that, at this time of night! I couldn't sleep . . . I felt lonely . . . Please, Pauline, please . . ."

The tears streamed down her face. She looked, even in the shaded light of the reading-lamp, a very old woman, in great distress.

She held out her hands. Pauline, with a quick gesture of forgiveness, went to her. She knelt down by her side, and closed her eyes. Irela, still sobbing, smoothed her hair.

"I shouldn't have asked you . . ." she said brokenly, "but I had to speak to somebody. I'm so nervous nowadays. My voice . . . all these roles . . . I don't remember things as well as I did . . . I was going through the score of 'Boheme' in my head and I muddled up some of the recitatives . . ." She paused and sighed, a long, trembling sigh. "Don't let's think of it. Tell me about yourself . . . about your evening."

Pauline told her. She, too, was eager to speak to somebody. She began at the beginning, not knowing where her words would lead her. Speaking in a soft, excited voice, she told what they had eaten for dinner, what Donald had said, she explained the plot of the film, she reached the part where the film lovers had appeared . . . she paused.

She looked up. Irela's eyes were closed. Her mouth drooped open, revealing a lolling tongue. There came from the magic throat a long, weary snore.

IT was just ten when Pauline came downstairs, and as she passed the music-room she heard Irela trying out her voice. Tensely, she listened. By now she knew all the variations, all the tones and half-tones which indicated whether she was "in voice" or not.

The familiar sounds began. First a great deal of pushing and bumping with the music stool. Then impatient footsteps clattering over the polished floor. She was closing a window. Then more bumping with the music stool, and a loud bang as she lifted back the lid of the piano.

All these noises were accompanied by violent clearings of the throat. There is a legend—by whom begun, God only knows, certainly by no musician—there is a legend that singers do not clear their throats. Whether it is considered unladylike for them to do so, or whether it is thought that their vocal chords are too delicate to withstand the strain of such a common action, it is impossible to say. Certainly Irela cleared her throat every morning of her life, with harsh, emphatic scrapes. Anybody listening to her would have thought that she had either swallowed a crumb the wrong way round or was about, quite firmly, and efficiently, to spit.

The throat-clearing having been achieved, she stuck the chord of C major and sang "Ma!" on low C. She began the note with closed lips and then opened them, so that it was really a hum which expanded into a clear note. This was Irela's favorite exercise, to which, she maintained, a great deal of her amazing freshness was due. Perhaps it may be an old trick of the trade, known to all singers. It evidently stood her in good stead.

She "ma'd" up the octave and down again, sometimes repeating a note several times when it did not seem to her clear enough, pausing on it and singing with a certain timbre of indignation. Pauline, listening at the door, was inconsequently reminded of a sheep bleating for its mamma. Her lips parted in a smile. She checked it immediately, as a form of irreverence, but she was glad that she could smile, because it showed that Irela was in very good form.

The scales were soon finished. Irela never "practised" for long . . . a fact which always puzzled those who had been brought up on the popular legend that great singers warble incessantly all day. If they do, they may be great singers, but they will not sing for long. Irela once wrote an extremely rude letter to a famous novelist whose heroine, a prima donna, practised scales for three hours every morning. The letter was full of disjointed abuse, but there did emerge from it the interesting fact that even when she was a girl studying her roles, she never sang for more than two hours a day. She studied in her head at the piano, learning each phrase with her keen, retentive brain, fixing it as much by sight as by sound, and only gently humming it when it was perfect.

The arpeggios began. First low, beginning at A, then up the scale, up, up . . . Pauline was anxious again. What would the top C be like? Oh, what would it be like? Clear or woody? Even more important than that, loud or soft? For if it was loud, danger was ahead. This much she learnt from Irela, that you must never sing a high note unless you can sing it pianissimo. Over and over again had she barked this advice at young singers. "I shall crack if I sing it softly," young girls would wail. "Crack then!" They would refuse, still bellowing the note with the full force of their lungs. But eventually they gave in. And whether they cracked or not, they sang their top notes pianissimo for the rest of their lives.

Up to A . . . that was all right . . . B flat . . . pretty good . . . B natural. Oh, dear, she was getting louder . . . and then C, fortissimo! Pauline bit her lip. This was rather dreadful. True, it had been a beautiful note, round and crystalline, but the fact that Irela had sung it fortissimo showed that she was funking, and she never funked without reason. Pauline heard the piano lid bang back again, and the stool being pushed aside, and she fled downstairs just in time.

Irela met her in the morning-room. She looked restless and uneasy, but she made no mention of her voice. She did not even answer Pauline's "Good morning." All she said was, "I've got to go and see Campbell Bliss. Are you ready?" Pauline went upstairs to put on her hat.

IT was eleven o'clock when they arrived at Campbell Bliss's house in Harley Street.

Bliss was an old Scotsman who had been for some years the most famous throat specialist in London—possibly in Europe. He had gazed, with suitable emotions, at the exalted uvulas of most of the Spanish princes, and had sprayed the palates of enormous bearded Chancellors from Central Europe. He had made Mussolini say "Gee, gee," as though he were a little boy, and had delivered pound after pound of glycerine lozenges to St. James' Palace, where they were, let us hope, dutifully sucked. Life sometimes seemed to him to be an endless succession of yawning mouths. It would appear, indeed, that he had only to arrive on the distant horizon for people to open their mouths. "Even if I were Daniel in the lions' den," he once said, "I believe I should ask the lions to say 'Ah!' "

With Irela, however, it was different. For one thing, her throat gave him an artistic pleasure. After they had entered his consulting-room, and Irela had introduced Pauline, he turned to her and said:

"Look here, young lady, I'll give you an object lesson as to why madame's the greatest singer in the world. Look at this, to begin with . . ."

He placed his hand on Irela's shoulders, ran it caressingly up her neck, not as a lover, but as though he were a sculptor cherishing a fine piece of work.

"No singer I've ever known had a neck like that," he went on. "It's the ideal formation. Now show your teeth."

"Damn it, Campbell, I'm not a horse."

"Show your teeth," commanded the old man.

Irela grinned at him. They were wonderful teeth for a woman of sixty—firm, white and even.

"Now open your mouth."

Irela folded her arms. She was not angry, but she was impatient. "I'm singing to-night and if you want to make a medical exhibit of me you can do it another time."

"What—nervous at your age?" he chaffed.

"That's a rude thing to say, Campbell Bliss, and you know it. Yes, I am nervous."

"You. Pshaw!"

"I couldn't take my top C pianissimo this morning," she snapped.

He looked at her gravely. All hint of banter gone. Then he smiled—a very kind smile—shook his head, said, "You're a wonderful woman, Irela." He nodded several times. Then briskly he said, "Open wide."

SHE opened. He looked into her throat long and deep. Sprayed it for a moment, looked again. Pauline was aching with anxiety. He took a little instrument with a magnifying glass attached to a nickel handle. After this last examination he frowned at her and said:

"If I didn't know you were a well-behaved woman I'd say you'd got a corn on your vocal chords."

"What?" Irela glared at him angrily. "How could I have a corn with my method? Don't you know I've cured more corns on vocal chords by my exercises than you'd ever cure if you lived to be a hundred and fifty?" she snorted. "You're drunk."

"All right. I'm drunk."

She became suddenly pleading. "Campbell, what is it?"

"It's only a slight inflammation."

"Nothing else?"

"Nothing."

"Then why," she said, angry again, "did you talk such damned nonsense about corns?"

"I didn't say you had one. I said if you weren't such a well-behaved girl I'd suspect you of having one."

"It was a very tactless thing to say."

"Have you ever known me to be tactful—in forty years?" he asked as he handed her a prescription.

She gave him an enchanting smile. Instantly she seemed once more her old self. She burbled, and warbled, and chattered. She did her imitation of an owl making love. She fluttered round the room—clumsily, it is true, a little creakily—but she fluttered. Then she lay back in a big leather chair, out of breath, kicking a tattoo on the floor with her Russian boots.

"Now, come, come, Irela," said Bliss, "you mustn't carry on like that or the other patients will think we're having a love affair."

She ignored his reproof. "Tell darling Pauline what a wonderful woman I am."

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"Hasn't she found that out already?"

Pauline laughingly assured him that she had.

"Well, I'll tell you this," said Bliss, gravely regarding Pauline through his spectacles; "if Irela hadn't been the greatest singer in the world, she'd have been a great business woman. The trouble with you," he went on, turning to Irela again, "is that you ought to have been a man."

"Get along with you!" cried Irela, adoring it all.

"How much money have you got?" he demanded shrewdly.

"Never you mind!"

"You see?" he said to Pauline, "she's got so much money that she doesn't know what to do with it. And it's all in gilt-edged securities."

In such ponderous, but not unpleasant, banter, passed the next ten minutes. Then a footman arrived and informed them that an ex-Archduke was, at that moment, impatiently waving an inflamed uvula in the waiting-room, and they made their departure.

PAULINE, by now, was beginning to realise that the task of being a companion to Irela, on this day of days, was no sinecure. Although it was barely twelve o'clock, she was already beginning to feel a little exhausted. Irela, however, was still bubbling over.

She bounced up and down in the car like an aged roysterer, her pearls jangling, her hat with the paradise plumes slightly awry, emitting little shrill laughs. It was really a form of nerves which, had she been a less vital woman, would have reduced her to a trembling mass.

Then she changed again, suddenly sinking back into the car and biting her finger-nails. They were bound for Hampstead Heath.

"Lower the window, darling," she snapped in anything but a "darling" voice. "No. Not so much. There, that's better." A moment later. "There's a fearful draught. You'll have to shut it again."

Then she peered at Dingley. "Dingley's neck's red," she said in gloomy tones.

"Oh, I don't think very red," murmured Pauline.

"I didn't say very red, did I?" Irela glared at her. "You must be accurate, darling. When I say a thing I mean it."

"Do you think," hastily asked Pauline, "that it always means he's been drinking? I mean, it's very cold, and that might make his neck red?"

"Why should cold make his neck red? Does your neck go red when you're cold?"

Pauline felt somewhat at a loss to answer this unusual question. She had never worked out the relative effects of temperature and the color of necks.

"Of course he's been drinking," continued Irela. "I've a good mind to tell him so."

"Oh—please don't upset yourself to-day, not to-day."

"I've a good mind to," brooded Irela. "Why I don't sack him, I don't know. He told me yesterday his wife's got another baby coming. It's disgusting, the amount of babies he makes that wretched woman have. This must be about the tenth since last October. I wouldn't stand it, if I were her."

She stared malevolently at the tell-tale neck of the uxorious Dingley. Pauline longed to present him with a tin of talc powder which he might use in emergencies.

Up and down Hampstead Heath they walked. There was a cold wind, that fleered across the surface of the artificial pond, causing it to break into icy spray at the edges. The few draggled ducks on its surface buried their heads in their feathers. They descended into a hollow, where the wind was less keen. Sad, grey pieces of newspaper fluttered about them. Overhead the sky was like a slate on which a tired, cross child had chalked a blurred design. Irela clung to Pauline's arm as they picked their way down the desolate, twisted paths.

"How very strange and unlikely all this is!" thought Pauline. "Here am I, with the greatest singer in the world—a woman whose name will never be erased from the scroll of history—a woman who, with Patti and Jenny Lind, will always be remembered as long as music is remembered—and I am guiding her down a horrible little path on Hampstead Heath in a cold wind, talking about her chauffeur's neck! To-day is one of the greatest days of her whole career—if only I could dramatise it! I should be so thrilled that I should not have lived in vain—yet I cannot dramatise it. How can one dramatise Hampstead Heath? Irela ought to be lying at home, pale and abstracted, with lilies about her, and a tall, white-haired lover hovering near the window, reminding her of the days when she sang for him in Venice, when they were young, when spring was in the air, and the grey palaces were necklaced with laburnum, and the moonlight quivered to the ecstasy of mandolines, singing songs older than the Italian hills, older than the echoes that linger in the caves of the Italian hills. . . ."

Irela stopped, paused, shivered. She said, "I hope that damned Mrs. McPherson hasn't forgotten that I can't have any salt in anything for lunch."

SALT!

This was the theme that occupied them as they drove home. The iniquity of salt! How it did this to the vocal chords, and that to the stomach, and the other to the nervous system! How it would be quite impossible for Irela to sing a note if she touched salt . . . if she even smelt salt! By the time that they arrived at Charles St., Pauline felt convinced that the menu would be composed of kippers and salted almonds.

However, all was well. The sole was utterly devoid of salt, and was cooked to perfection. The baked apple, too, by a happy chance, betrayed no signs of the sinister salt. Nor, by a unique coincidence, did any salt appear to have drifted into the coffee. Irela finished her lunch with a sigh of satisfaction, wiped her lips with a napkin, and said, with surprising animation, "Dommies!"

Pauline had discovered that there was a certain technique to be observed when one played dominoes with Irela. First, it was necessary to comment on the beauty of the dominoes themselves. They were backed with mother of pearl and the pips were daintily painted in gold to represent rosebuds. Irela always liked to begin the game by explaining who gave them to her. . . .

"It was the Duc de Gravennes," she said. "He adored me. He used often to come over from Paris when I was singing, and have a special train from Dover. Oh, so chic. Everybody had special trains in those days. Now, of course, the income-tax man has made all that sort of thing quite impossible. And one day, in Paris, we had been dining together, and we went to see the apaches in the Rue de Lappe, and they were playing dominoes, and a divine apache—oh, so farouche—fell in love with me and wanted to teach me to play. The Duc made a terrible scene, because he was jealous. But he was sorry the next morning and he sent me these. Aren't they twee?"

They played an extremely simple variety of the game, in which the score is reckoned in multiples of five, counting the terminals only. Irela was a slow counter. She had, too, various idiosyncrasies which were inclined to pall, after one had been playing for a little while. Thus, whenever she counted up to seven, she piped, in imitation of a child:

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven,
All good children go to heaven."

After each of these exercises of wit, she laughed shrilly, and looked across at her opponent, who was expected to laugh, too. The opponent found no difficulty in laughing, for the first two or three times, but after that, any laughter, to appear spontaneous, must involve considerable physical discomfort.

Irela was in fighting mood this afternoon, and played with great skill. Perhaps her skill was slightly due to the artifices of Pauline, who endeavored, on every possible occasion, to avoid scoring, and often managed to retain in her hand, at the end of the game, the double six which counted against her. Each time that this happened Irela shrilled with delight.

"Mossy face!" she cried, pointing to Pauline's double-six. "You've got mossy face." Pauline never knew exactly why the double-six should be called mossy face, but she accepted the phrase in the spirit in which it was delivered.

And this, they played, and played, and played.

PAULINE looked at the clock. Would this day drag on for ever?

It was half-past three. Five hours before the curtain would go up! She was going to the opera with Donald—this much had Irela allowed her—perhaps because she had not been able, at the time, to think of an adequate excuse.

But Irela did not know that she was also meeting Donald beforehand. They had arranged a rendezvous for half-past five, by the little statue that stands, so forlorn and forgotten, at the southern end of Berkeley Square. Why they had made this rendezvous Pauline could not imagine, since in any case they were going to the opera together. Still, there is was, and she was determined not to fail him.

Fortunately, fate worked in her favor. They had tea at half-past four . . . or, rather, Pauline had tea while Irela watched her. Then at five Irela said she was tired and would rest for an hour.

"You won't be going out, I suppose?" she said, as she stepped into the lift.

"I don't expect so," replied Pauline.

Within five minutes she had gone.

Her heart leapt as she saw him standing there, in his preposterously light American coat, a white muffler round his neck. She ran to him as to a refuge from the world's troubles. He drew her into the darkness of the porch of a house that was "to let."

"Oh, Don, I'm so tired," she whispered. "And I love you so!"

His lips, against hers—strong, masculine lips—the faint smell of tobacco—the flutter of his eyelashes against her cheeks—the smooth, sleek feeling of the nape of his neck as her hands caressed him. He held her so fast—all the strength of the world seemed to lie in his embrace—and she leant back in loving surrender, closing her eyes. For a tiny, exquisite eternity they remained. Then she looked at him. His eyes were still closed, as his face hovered above hers, and she noticed how long were the black lashes, and the one deep furrow on his forehead, and the thick wave in his hair. Noticed these things? Truer it were to say that she checked them—these things of which she had so often and so lately dreamed—checked them in the adorable catalogue of love.

He opened his eyes.

"Aren't we crazy?" he said. His voice was sleepy . . . dazed.

"Yes. We're crazy." She rubbed her small chin against his.

"I love you," he said.

"I love you," she said. And in a level voice, added, "If you say that again, I shall cry."

He held her more tightly. Overhead the keen winter wind assaulted the naked branches of the plane trees. There was a rustling and a shivering in the square. From the great trees round Lansdowne House there boomed an echo that seemed to come from frozen, distant seas. Oh, this . . . this was the purpose of life . . . this was the one reality to be extracted from a world of gibbering shadows. And the sentence they had just repeated was the only sentence that rang true in a universe of empty sounds and insane echoes.

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She said it again silently, with her lips alone, as lovers do when they love deeply. He saw the movement of her lips and said:

"What's the matter, honey?"

She detached herself gently, and smiled at him. "Nothing," she said. "Oh, nothing at all." She sighed deeply. The cold air seemed to fill her lungs, to sting her back to sense. Her eyes opened wide. They both laughed.

Then, remembering, she put her hand in the pocket of her coat. "Your ticket."

"Gee—that's swell." He took it, examining it with awe. "P148. Is it next to yours?"

"Of course it is. At the back, too. So that she won't see us."

"You didn't have to pay for it?"

"Of course not."

"Is she all right?"

For the moment she had forgotten Irela. "Yes . . . oh, yes. . . . But naturally it's a little nerve-racking." Then abruptly, as though she heard a voice calling her, she said, "I must go."

"So soon?"

"We'll be seeing each other again in an hour or two."

Lightly, then, their lips brushed together. For a moment they looked into each other's eyes. There was so much to say, so little time to say it. They wondered, both of them, "Will there ever be time?"

THE clock struck six as Pauline slipped through the front door. The hall was misty, and yet it seemed overheated. The lights were turned on in the drawing-room. She decided that it would be best to be quite honest about having gone out, though she would not, of course, say anything about Donald. She would make up some fib. Before she had decided what the fib should be, Irela's voice was calling "Pauline!"

"Coming!"

Irela was sitting on the sofa near the fire. A small table, covered with a white cloth, as though laid for supper, stood in front of her. All round, on the floor and spread over the cushions, were the evening newspapers.

"Where have you been?" asked Irela sharply.

"Well . . ." Pauline hesitated. Then her eyes noticed the newspapers and she said, "I just ran out to get a paper."

"Why?" She looked at her curiously. Then suddenly her expression changed. "Oh, I see," she said, more amiably. "You wanted to see if that scoundrel, Kober, has been saying anything else. Well, he has. Look at this!"

She picked up the "Evening Clarion," which was so rumpled that it looked as though it had been used to light the fire, and pointed to a small paragraph in the "Londoner's Diary." She read:

"By the way, I saw Arthur Kober, the celebrated impresario, lunching at the Ritz with the charming Lady Hope Martineau. Mr. Kober is, of course, taking a very important part in the present opera season, which the evergreen Irela is initiating at the Imperial Theatre to-night. Chatting with him, over liqueurs, he told me that Londoners would be entranced by the new star, Baba Letolle, who makes her debut in 'Lucia' on Monday night."

"Oh, dear," said Pauline, when she had finished reading. She could not think of anything else to say. The paragraph did not strike her as very terrible, but it had evidently upset Irela very much indeed, for she cried:

"Intriguing still, you see! And at a time like this!"

Pauline shook her head sympathetically.

"Evergreen;" snorted Irela. "As though I were a damned Christmas tree."

"Perhaps he didn't say it. . . ."

"Then he probably said I was dried up. Why the ex-soldiers don't tar and feather him I can't imagine."

Pauline said nothing. When Irela began to invoke the aid of the mythical body of ex-soldiers who were to tar and feather Arthur Kober, she knew that it was best to hold her peace.

"And why," continued Irela, with ever-rising wrath, "that fool of a Millie Rockstone allows her daughter to lunch with Bolshevik rats like Kober, I can't imagine either. I'd speak to her if I thought it would do any good. But it wouldn't. He's hypnotised the girl—that's what he's done."

"Oh, really. . . ."

"Yes, he has," interrupted Irela. "He's a hypnotist. He looks at them with those snake's eyes, and he pushes his big nose up against their faces, and he plays the piano to them and then it's all up. The police ought to be told about it . . . they ought."

She swayed backwards and forwards, clutching and unclutching the heavily-jewelled fingers. Pauline noticed the nervous gesture, and noticed, with a pang of pity, that they were the hands of an old woman; an old, lonely, angry woman who, in a few hours' time, would be drifting across the stage before an immense audience, in the guise of a young girl. She sat down beside Irela, looked into the raddled face, put her hand gently on the old shoulders. . . .

Irela swept her hand away. "No, you can't fool me," she cried, and her voice was the voice of a woman obsessed. "I know that man and his filthy ways. Talking about Baba Letolle . . ." and here, with a hideous, infantile gesture she made a "baby" face, and croaked in baby language, "Leetle Baba Letolle. . . ." Then she threw back her head, and looked stern and suddenly magnificent. "How dare he talk about Baba Letolle in the same breath as Irela? How dare he?"

"Nobody ever would . . . nobody," declared Pauline loyally.

"Oh, my dear. . . ." She turned and clutched Pauline's hand. "I wish you were a man, to punish him! I wish you were a man. . . ."

They stayed like that, silently for a few moments. The fire flickered on the hearth, the clock ticked on, faster, faster. Pauline looked up and saw that it was ten past six. She rose to her feet.

"Now, you mustn't upset yourself any more," she said.

Irela shook her head mournfully, and stared into the fire.

"It's ten past six already."

"What?" Instantly all recrimination, all mournful regret, was banished. She tugged the bell. The chic and dissipated John appeared, cringed before her wrath, brought hot soup and a dozen oysters. The soup was swallowed, and the oysters were devoured while Pauline hurried up to dress. At a quarter to seven they set off for the theatre, and now panic, deadly, sickening panic seized Pauline, while Irela was as calm as a woman without a heart.

CHAPTER 9.

THEY did not speak in the car. All the way, Pauline was fearful that something would happen. The fog had given place to rain, and the roads were slippery. If there were a skid. . . . But there was no skid. The admirable Dingley, whose comparatively pale neck testified to his temporary abstention in honor of the occasion, drove them swiftly and surely through the crowded, noisy streets.

Pauline, glimpsing the men and women who flashed by, like marionettes under their glistening umbrellas, marvelled at the number of people in the world who would not be hearing Irela to-night, people who would not be frightened or exhilarated, people who would merely go to their homes, and perhaps a cinema, to return and cook sausages over a hissing gas fire. There was something vaguely comforting in the thought that for quite a considerable number of the world's inhabitants, the manner in which Irela sang to-night was a matter of comparative indifference. Foolishly her mind fluttered, in that brief space, over the world's surface, seeking consolation. She tried to think of Indian coolies, who would not cease for a moment from picking rice, or whatever coolies picked, because of Irela's performance. Of sailors on the cold, oily depths of the Atlantic, to whom the winds would bring no echo of her song. Of shepherds on the Attic hills to whom the only significant sound in the world's symphony was the tinkle of their own sheep-bells. Of quiet country vicars who would, even now, be lighting little lamps in their greenhouses to keep the frost from bruising the petals of the young cyclamen.

But when they came in sight of the Imperial Theatre, all these soothing images, the coolies, the sailors, the shepherds, and even the vicars were swept away, and panic reigned supreme.

Panic flickered from the immense electric sign which proclaimed the word:

IRELA

It flickered in rose, and yellow, and arsenic green as the lights melted dizzily into one another. She wished that those lights would stay still. There was something sinister in this perpetual change. Underneath, in cold, silver fire, burned the words: "To-night: 'La Boheme.'" Those words were fixed, eternal. Then why should Irela flash, chameleon-like, through so many tinted moods? Was there not a moral—a dire moral—attached to this phenomenon? Was there not some hidden implication that while the opera was the same as ever, the star, the vast, glittering star, was suffering a sad and awful transition?

She made a tremendous effort to put these thoughts from her. But she could not. Panic proclaimed itself in the surging crowds outside the theatre itself. The doors were not yet opened for the gallery, and the queue seemed to stretch half-way down Shaftesbury Avenue. As they glided past, to the stage door entrance, Pauline had a vision of hundreds of patient men and women who had been waiting there since dawn. Some of them, those who were nearest the doors, had lined up the night before. This much of their life had they sacrificed, this much had they denied themselves of food and drink, even of the common amenities of sleep and rest. For what? For a legend. No, she staunchly told herself. For no legend. For the reality of beauty which still lingered in Irela's throat.

Overwhelmed with emotion, she put her hand on Irela's. Her eyes were wet with tears. "I'm so proud," she whispered, "so proud."

To which Irela replied, "I hope that damned Tremlowe hasn't forgotten to put the tuck in my wig."

A less sensible girl than Pauline might have been grieved by this response to her emotional outburst. But Pauline merely smiled. She was glad Irela was still calm, still mistress of the situation. She herself had, by now, surrendered utterly to panic. She could not control her knees. She could not even control her face.

Panic increased as the minutes sped by. It echoed in the corridors as they clattered to the big dressing-room. People pressed against the walls to let Irela pass. The crowd outside tried to fight their way through. Irela merely walked on calmly, saying in a cross voice, "Let me through, please," and digging a would-be worshipper in the ribs with her umbrella. Her common sense, her lack of "pose," was amazing. A sentimental old stage hand met her at the door of her dressing room, and said:

"Madame, I rang up the curtain for you at 'Lucia,' forty years ago. . . ."

Irela replied, "Yes, and you almost rang it down on my head, damn you, Tom," and passed on.

Tremlowe was waiting in the dressing-room. It was a bower of flowers—creamy lilies, stiff, proud carnations, clusters of orchids lolling in purple abandon over the carpet, wreaths of laurel, crowns of roses. In the centre of these tributes stood Tremlowe, watery-eyed.

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"Oh, my lady!" she said, looking sniffily at the flowers.

"Phew!" cried Irela, throwing off her coat. "The room stinks. Take the things out."

Tremlowe sniffed, began to weep, thought better of it, and called a stage hand, who bundled the flowers out into the corridor.

"If I had all the money that people had spent on giving me flowers," said Irela, as she sat down at the dressing table, "I should be a rich woman. Tremlowe, where's that wig?"

TREMLOWE produced the wig. Irela fitted it on, pronounced it satisfactory, and proceeded to make up.

For a little while Pauline's panic was lost, submerged in the more powerful personality of this older woman who was so superbly rising to the occasion. Somehow the absence of affectation, of "shi-shi," in Irela, was more moving than any languors or wailing protestations. As she looked back on the day, Pauline realised that it had been like the day of a fighter, preparing for some tremendous combat. True, there had been outbursts of nerves and temper. But these had not deflected Irela from the steely purpose of her programme. Her diet, her exercise, her visit to Campbell Bliss her repose . . . everything had been directed to the one idea, that she should sing well to-night. Even the apparently unreasoned frenzy against Kober had been, in reality, a form of challenge against the forces which were arrayed against her. And now, here she was, at ten minutes past seven, fully an hour and a half before the curtain was due to rise, making up with the same cool, deliberate attention which had characterised all her movements during the day.

"This tube of 'Twenty-one' is too dry," she barked to Tremlowe. "Give me another one."

Tremlowe handed it to her.

"That's better."

She smeared it over her face. Watching her, so cruelly outlined in the blazing white lights, with every wrinkle, every sagging pocket of flesh exaggerated, Pauline wondered how this aged face could ever be given even the semblance of youth. Yet, as she watched, the miracle took place. Irela knew every trick of the trade. She had learnt the art of make-up from a little Italian dresser she once employed, years ago, in Chicago, by name Flavian Moresco. Flavian had taught her all that could be known, and more, for he had worshipped her face, not always, it must be admitted, from a distance. He it was who had taught her that with her peculiar bone structure she could afford to emphasise the rouge on the cheek-bones and accentuate an almost white line of powder from the nostrils to the chin. He, too, who told her that she need not fear to paint a monstrous bow around her lips, while she must paint out her eyebrows till they were almost non-existent. He who had prescribed the precise tint of purple for the eyelids, and had charted the blue shadows which must lurk beneath her ears. Irela's make-up, when it was completed, was grotesque and frightening in the bright lights of the dressing-table. But when she stood up, in the half light, when she had slipped on the cunning little dress of black sateen, and placed her hands on her hips in a gesture, she looked to Pauline, for one entranced moment, like a young girl.

"D'you like me?"

"Oh, my dear, . . ." Pauline's brimming eyes finished the sentence which she would not complete.

Irela chuckled. "Well, darling . . . run along now."

Pauline kissed her hand—so withered, so white with liquid powder. "God bless you," was all she could say.

Irela flicked the part of her hand where Pauline's lips had rested. She did not want to have to powder it again. As Pauline left the room she cried, "And for God's sake, clap!"

DONALD was there, waiting for her. She had gone out to the stage door entrance, for a few minutes, to calm her nerves. Then, looking at her watch, she saw that it was a quarter-past eight, and she hurried back, down the corridors, through the pass door, into the bustling stalls.

She saw him from a distance, sitting in one of the back rows. She was thankful to see that they were next to a pillar against which they could hide.

She pressed his arm. "Oh, I do hope . . . I do hope," she whispered, "that it's going to be all right."

"Sure, it's going to be all right. How did you leave the old dame?"

She frowned at him, a serious frown. "You mustn't say that," she said. "She's the greatest woman in the world."

It seemed only a few minutes before the house was full. It was what is known as a brilliant audience. "Too brilliant," Pauline thought inconsequently. It seemed to make Irela's ordeal more terrible. Everybody in the world had come to hear her.

Ah! here were the King and the Queen! With the sound of a rushing wind the whole audience rose to its feet. A dramatic gesture, and the white hand of Sovino was raised. The kettledrum beat a military tattoo, announcing the National Anthem. How lovely the Queen looked in white, with diamonds glittering round her fine shoulders! There was another woman in the box with them. Who would that be? A lady-in-waiting, perhaps? The first great chords of the National Anthem swept out like a wave, drowning further thought. Pauline stared straight ahead, like a soldier at attention.

And now indeed it had begun. The lights dipped, dimmed, were extinguished. Now there was nothing but a sense of a vast crowded cave, and in front the little spangles of light in the orchestra. Soon one did not notice even these. . . . One saw only Sovino's hands, like fluttering birds, like white birds, swooping and turning, erased with melody.

It is windy and boisterous, the brief overture to "Boheme," a gale blows through the strings, whistles up the wood-wind, rattles in the drums. Whether it is "great" music or "little" music need not concern us. It has the quality of excitement, which is enough. There was a fever in the brain of the man who wrote it, an infectious fever, too, for it spreads always through the darkened houses where it is played, quickening the breath, flushing the cheeks with anticipation. Many lovelier overtures have been written, built on a grander scale, telling of infinitely finer things, drenched in a poetry which finds no echo in Puccini, conceived with a delicacy of which he was incapable. He was not fit, one knows, to buckle the shoes of the great ones. Yet none of them could have written an overture that was so exactly right for this occasion . . . none of them could have ushered in a great prima donna with a wilder, sweeter breath.

The curtain was up. Rudolf was singing . . . yes, singing superbly. He walked the stage so easily, his voice drifted so very gaily with this wild wind of melody that was blowing over the footlights. Pauline, who knew every phrase of the opera, had been used, at rehearsals, to pick it into its multiform sections, to count the bars before a recitatif. Now she saw it again as a whole and marvelled at its swift progression. Almost she forgot the advent of Irela. Then suddenly a warning phrase made her heart leap within her. In a few moments it would be her cue. It was almost here . . . the knock at the door, and the voice outside. . . . "Scusi."

We have said that Puccini was not a great composer. It is an unprofitable observation, leading nowhere, and open to many qualifications. For at certain rare moments, something happens in most Puccini operas which only he could make happen . . . sound becomes drama, a single phrase becomes almost agonisingly articulate. There is a change of key, just before Mimi's entrance in "Boheme," after she has knocked at the door, where this miracle happens. It happened now. Pauline sat there, her hands clenched tight in her lap. There was a lull in the storm of music. Ah! there was the knock . . . so faint, ah, surely too faint. Was she unwell? . . . Rudolf called, in his grave, sweet tenor, "Chi e la," and then, like a wave that swells, reaches a higher shore, and ebbs slowly back, the strings drifted, with a slight crescendo, to another key, and from outside the door there came her voice: "Scusi!"

The enchantment had begun. It was instantaneous. Nobody in the theatre, after those two notes had echoed through it, was quite the same. Some, it is true, were held in the thrall of a legend only . . . they clutched each other's hands and whispered, "There she is." And others felt as though they were watching for a queen, leaning eagerly forward with their opera glasses fixed on the door, waiting for it to open and the faint light to shine upon her. But with most of them it was from the voice alone that the magic was born . . . a voice so utterly sweet and young, the voice of a little boy, piping plaintively outside the door, to be let in.

After this—after she had come in and sung the first few bars of "Me chiamano Mimi," Pauline surrendered utterly. Irela was singing superbly . . . that was all she cared about. There was no need to worry any more. She lay back, her hand twisted in Donald's, exquisitely happy. And when the curtain came down, and the applause broke around them, sweeping and tumultuous, she still sat there, looking straight ahead.

"I love you," whispered Donald.

She could only smile and press his hand.

"I'm terribly glad, darling, for your sake."

She turned to him, and said eagerly, "Now you understand? You see . . . the spell she has over you?"

He did not smile, nor did he answer.

"Don't you see?" she repeated.

"Yes." And his voice was strangely grave. "It almost frightens me."

"Why?"

"I feel she could do anything she liked with people . . . with you."

"Oh, she could . . . she could!" Pauline did not notice that his eyes were clouded.

"She could dominate you . . . make you do things that you would never normally do . . . just because of her voice, or even the memory of her voice."

"Yes, yes, indeed!" She had never heard Donald speak so generously of Irela before.

"She could take your heart, and keep it all to herself, couldn't she?"

She looked at him quickly. "Don, what do you mean?"

"You know."

Then she smiled at him. She would have liked to put her hand over his eyes and kiss his lips. But all she could do was to say, "The same old prejudice coming out again!"

"I'm jealous, Pauline . . . terribly jealous."

"How can you be jealous of a voice?"

"It isn't only a voice . . . it's an enchantment . . . it's a legend . . . Oh, I don't know what it is. I didn't realise it till to-night."

"Even so, it's a woman's voice."

"That doesn't make it any better. If it were a man's I could say, 'Oh, well, Pauline's just crazy, and she'll forget it.' But this . . . there's no getting hold of it . . . It's like struggling with something that you can't see . . ."

"Don!" She frowned at him. "You're being morbid."

"Am I?" He did not speak for a moment. Then he suddenly smiled. "Gee—I guess I am! It's just because I love you. When we're married, I'll probably be jealous of the radio, and throw it out of the window."

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"You are glad she's singing so beautifully . . . that it is a success—aren't you?"

"Sure I'm glad. Damned glad!"

THE interval was a short one. People were in their places punctually when the curtain went up. The second act proceeded swiftly, like the carnival that it is. Mimi's part, in this act, is slight . . . there is only a slender ribbon of song that winds through the exquisite embroidery of the chorus . . . the song of the "Cuñesta Rosa." So slight is the tune, and so strong and varied its accompaniment that Pauline feared Irela's voice might be overwhelmed. Sometimes in rehearsals it had seemed so. But to-night, as soon as she took up the lilting air, it spun and sparkled so clearly that one did not ask whether it was powerful or weak . . . one only knew it was beautiful. The ribbon of melody seemed pure gold, and its background mere homespun cloth.

Another interval. And now, the third act . . . the "Addio" . . . the only danger spot. Pauline, for the first time in the evening, was gripped by a real fear.

"I'm frightened now . . ." she whispered to Donald, just as the lights were going down. "The 'Addio' is so terribly important. She has to carry it practically alone. And it has to be perfect legato singing . . ."

"Well, it will be, won't it?"

Her hands were trembling absurdly. "Yes . . . yes . . . I hope so, indeed, but sometimes her voice has failed a little, just on the last phrase . . ."

"Failed?"

She could not say the word she really wanted to say . . . "cracked." It sounded, somehow, like an insult to Irela. Nor was it possible to say any more at all, for the curtain was up again, and there in front of them was the stage, lit by a unearthly light, with the snow falling and the sentry pacing to and fro.

Swiftly the act progressed; too swiftly, it seemed to Pauline. She had a feeling that Sovino's white hands were urging the actors on to some dreadful climax. Dreadful? She started, as the word entered her head. Why was she worrying? Everything was going perfectly. Irela was singing as divinely as she had ever sung in her life . . . the silver notes were laden with sadness as flowers are laden with snow . . . cool silver notes that seemed to have drifted from spaces immensely distant. Here was the "Addio" itself, and never had it sounded lovelier . . . all was well . . . the last phrase was almost accomplished . . .

"Addio . . . senza . . ."

And then it happened. The horrible thing happened. The voice cracked. It was absolutely unmistakable. True, she recovered miraculously, by doing the only thing possible, which was to take a quick breath, and to go straight on to the word "rancor." But the phrase, by being thus cut in half, was musically ruined.

Pauline felt as though a cold wind blew through the theatre. It was not only Irela's personal tragedy that mattered . . . there was a sense of something that had been living and beautiful that was now dead. As though she had been watching a bird in full flight, that had suddenly crumpled up its wings, shot to the heart. She looked timidly at Donald. She wanted terribly to feel that he was near, that he was suffering too. But no, he was gazing at the stage, as though rapt, in a trance. She looked beyond him—everywhere, on people's faces there was a look of ecstasy. Was it possible . . . was it conceivable, that they had not noticed? That the great public had been unaware of anything wrong?

She breathed again. There was still this cold, deadening weight on her heart, but it was lifting, little by little. Irela, too, was singing exquisitely again. There seemed nothing wrong. "Oh, I am too anxious . . . too sensitive about it all," thought Pauline. But then she said to herself, "However, even if the public did not notice, what about the critics?" Again she answered herself, "Surely the critics would not comment on a single flaw like that when she had given them so much that is lovely?" But she remembered that whether the public noticed it or the critics commented, Irela herself would know—she would feel that she had failed. Oh, it was terrible, this suspense. She longed for the act to be over, to hear the verdict.

The incident in which Madame Irela attacks Donald Gage, photographer, who subsequently falls in love with the great singer's niece. This is a scene from the Gaumont-British film of "Evensong."

The act was over at last. Only the final act now remained, and that was short and easy. Meanwhile the verdict of the audience, so far, seemed to be unmistakable. They were adoring it. That at least was the impression Pauline had. Time and again they recalled Irela, who bowed this way and that, looking absurdly young, curtsied to the King, caught a bouquet of roses, kissed her hand, bowed again. Pauline decided that she would say nothing to Donald about the disaster. In fact, she had almost persuaded herself that it was not a disaster. Perhaps she might mention it when the next act was over . . . when they were leaving the theatre. Quite casually. Just to set her mind at rest.

They went outside and mingled with the crowd. She tried to hear what people were saying, but Donald would insist on talking. She was so anxious to listen to the general trend of the conversation that she told Donald to run away for a moment and get the drink which she was sure he wanted. He went off, laughing at her intuition.

HE had not been gone a moment before something happened which turned her happiness to misery, her pride to a terrible sort of apprehension.

She was standing alone in the corridor. She leant against the wall, looking radiantly pretty, watching the crowds that drifted by, hearing greetings exchanged. She felt a strange exaltation in the fact that she was, so to speak, behind the scenes this evening. She would have liked to cry out, "I know Irela, and you don't. Yes! I'm her niece. I know what she looks like in bed, what she says in the morning, what she likes to eat. I know everything!"

While she stood dreaming there, her attention was caught by an extremely vociferous group of young men and women who had paused by her side. It was in the apocryphal days of the Bright Young People. One forgets, nowadays, exactly what they did or why they did it, and one has not the energy to remember. It is enough that a dozen of them were standing near Pauline at the moment. The girls had disturbingly flat figures, hair like burnished metal, and dull eyes. The boys were vivacious . . . attractive in an odd way. The whole group chattered gaily and this is what they said:

"My dear, it's too embarrassing . . ."

"Next year, they'll be giving us Albani . . ."

"One can see her decaying before one's very eyes . . ."

"My dear, when she cracked, I thought I should die. . . ."

"Oh, but that was the one part I adored. The loveliest crack! And her face . . . too divine. . . ."

"I adore all of it. Lovely Puccini! Such heavenly nonsense. . . ."

"Do you think she'll crack again? If you think so I shall stay. Otherwise I shall go on to Tony's."

"Darling, you can't go on to Tony's. He'll still be horribly sober. Besides, I know she's going to crack again . . . dozens of times."

"If you're sure . . ."

"But, of course, angel! She was to sing on the bed, and die, and it'll be too heavenly."

"Not on the bed? It can't be true? It isn't true?"

"But, darling, she dies all over the bed."

"Yes—of consumption!"

"She fades away with dozens of high C's and coughs and coughs and coughs!"

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"No! I can't miss it. My dear, supposing she really dies. . . ."

"Oh, that would be too much to hope for."

"I think you're all too bitter. I love the old war-horse."

"Could she ever sing?"

"I can't imagine. I must look it up in Green's 'English History.'"

"She must have had some voice. . . ."

"She lost it coming through the Rye."

"Well, what is the fuss about?"

"There must be some explanation."

"Are you coming on Monday to Baba Letoile?"

"Nothing would keep me away. Felix said she was like a nightingale."

"How frightful! Nightingales are too nauseating."

"Don't be tiresome, Laura. You know what I mean."

"Terrific, she is, they say. She never stops. Enormous great notes booming."

"And never cracks. . . . How Irela must loathe her!"

"Darling, let's go and have a great deal of brandy."

"Oh, yes . . . yes . . . quickly. . . ."

"No—the curtain's going up. . . . There isn't time. . . ."

"What does it matter? She doesn't die for at least half an hour. . . ."

"Well . . . if you promise. . . . Oh, dear, I do hope the worst happens . . . don't you?"

Swishing and giggling they trailed off. Pauline stood there, staring after them. She was very pale, and her fists were tightly clenched. Only the fear of making a scene, of drawing more attention to this little group of detractors, had deterred her from breaking into their midst, and crying, "Shame . . . shame!" Donald came up, hurrying. He threw away his cigarette, and was just going to take her arm and lead her in when he noticed how strange she looked.

"Say, honey, is anything the matter?"

"Oh, Don . . ." she looked at him pitifully. She told him, in broken phrases, what had happened.

But he did not seem to think as seriously of it as she had done. "Well, they're just a lot of wise guys, that's all. Pull everything to pieces. Their fathers give 'em too much money. Decadent, that's what they are. Can't appreciate a lovely thing when they hear it. Too many young people like that in England. Now, in America . . ."

He was still trying to soothe her when they walked down the aisle and took their seats, just as the lights were lowered.

But Pauline need have had no fears. The last act was a thing of unblemished loveliness. And Irela's triumph, when the curtain fell, appeared to be complete.

DONALD, having seen Pauline to the stage-door, walked home with an old Fleet Street friend . . . a hard-bitten American newspaper man who free-lanced for the Hearst Press.

"What's your story going to be to-night?" said Donald.

"The Queen wears mauve."

"Oh, hell. . . . I mean about Irela."

"There ain't going to be no story about Irela."

"What? Why not?"

"They're fed up with the old dame over there."

"But don't you think she's marvellous?"

"Oh, she's marvellous, all right. So are the Pyramids. But I don't cable stories to New York that the Pyramids are still standing."

"You're tough, aren't you?"

"Sure, I'm tough." He took the damp stub of his cigar from between his lips, regarded it with regret, sighed, and threw it in the gutter. "I wouldn't be working in this damned climate if I weren't."

They walked on. He continued: "There'll be a story on Monday, all right."

"Baba Letoile?"

"Yeah. I'm keeping all my high explosives for her."

"Written your story already?"

"Sure . . . I've written it. The new nightingale that's fluttered here from the South, and all that sort of tripe. Dressing-room besieged by managers with contracts. Long-distance calls from the Metropolitan. Otto Kahn jumps off the Empire State Building out of sheer ecstasy. Hope to God she doesn't get tonsilitis or I shall have to write it all over again."

"Gee . . . I wish I could make my camera lie like your fountain pen."

"You can. That was your picture of Irela that got the splash in the 'Clarion,' wasn't it?"

"Yeah."

"Why d'you do it? Because of that girl friend of yours?"

"Never mind."

He put a hand on Donald's shoulder. "Well, if you're as wise a guy as I take you for, you'll get her away from that old dame quick! See?"

"No, I don't."

"Oh, yes, you do. I'd rather deal with forty-seven intoxicated mothers-in-law armed to the teeth, than with one Irela. She hasn't got hands. She's got claws. She's got her claws into your girl all right."

"How do you know all this?"

"Say . . . didn't you know I was a newspaper man?" He stopped at the corner of the street. The street lamp lit up his rough face. He regarded Donald kindly, quizzically. "That is where I get off," he said. "Good night."

Donald put up his coat collar and walked on. Though the night was not cold, he was shivering.

PART II.

THE FIGHTER.

CHAPTER 1.

BABA was singing the Mad Scene.

The last brilliant cadenza was accomplished, the last note rang through the house, strong and shrill, inhuman as a piccolo. Silence. And then, like the breaking of a vast wave, that thunders on, raises its towering crest, thunders again with a deep bass roar, giving tongue to a thousand minor voices, applause shook the theatre. It seemed, indeed, like a cataract that roared from roof to stalls, the whole theatre was deluged with the uproar, and even had there been any dissentient voices, they would have been swept along with the irresistible flood of acclamation.

But there were no dissentient voices. Baba had behaved exactly as the British public considered she should behave, by which we mean that she had delivered, in the right place and at the right moment, a quantity of exceedingly loud, high, clear notes. She had also given the impression that, had she desired, she could deliver, at a moment's notice, an equal quantity of even louder, higher, and clearer notes. This, the British public felt, was exactly as it should be. Women in the stalls, who were so musical that they thought and proclaimed that, "There's nothing like the human voice, is there?" nudged each other when Baba accomplished a particularly successful B flat. When she touched high D several young men from White's Club were visibly moved, and felt towards her the same sort of affection that they were accustomed to bestow upon some particularly energetic horse who surmounted an unusual obstacle during the Grand National. And even the few intelligent ones were held in a sort of horrified fascination that any human being could emit such awe-inspiring sounds with so stolid an expression. "She's like a Robot that's swallowed a canary," hissed old Mrs. Legrange, for whom Patti had often sung, free of charge, in the old days. Mrs. Legrange was immediately "Ssh'd" by an outraged Cabinet Minister, who had not had such an aesthetic treat since his boy sang "Oh, for the wings of a do-hove" in Eton chapel.

Pauline was standing in the shadow of the corridor outside Irela's box. She felt sick at heart. This was the moment above all others that she had dreaded. It would not be true to say that she had prayed for Baba's failure—Baba was a nice little thing, and she wished her no harm. But this—this overwhelming success was unbearable. Stepping forward a little, and looking over the balcony, she could see Baba, far below, bowing and smirking, this way and that. She could not bow very far because she was too fat, but she bounced about like a little ball, kissing a podgy hand, and occasionally tossing back a wisp of her enormous, marmalade-colored wig.

Pauline shrank back into the shadow. She must return to Irela at once. She must not desert her at this moment. Yet—it was terribly hard. What should she say? Should she pretend that it was not a triumph . . . that it was just a nice, friendly little welcome to a foreign soprano who had sung quite competently? She paused with her hand on the door of the box, irresolute. Then she opened the door half-way. What she saw seemed to chase away all her fears.

IRELA was leaning right out of her box, shouting, "Brava, brava!" There had been a slight lull in the applause, but now the famous voice, the little boy's voice, echoed out, floating like a silver bubble on the surface of the turbulent flood of sound. Baba turned and kissed her hand. Irela kissed her hand in return. Then the applause was more ferocious than ever. "The star that was setting paying tribute to the star that was rising," people whispered. It was really too touching, they thought, the old woman's generous tribute to that sweet, fat little thing, and mothers congratulated themselves that they had dragged their unwilling sons and daughters to this occasion, about which they would be able to tell their grandchildren, if they ever had any, which seemed doubtful, in the way the world was going, and how music did make one's mind wander, and ah! there was Irela throwing a bunch of roses to Baba, and how lucky that they just missed hitting her in the eye, and now the applause was deafening. But it was stopping at last, and they would go on. Perhaps she would sing higher than ever now!

When Irela threw the bouquet to Baba, Pauline had moved forward a little, longing to see the effect on the audience. Then she retreated again, for fear that she herself would be seen and spoil the picture. As soon as the applause died down, Irela, with a final gay smile, stepped back into the box. She was now out of everybody's sight. She turned towards Pauline. She did not see her.

Her face was the face of a murderess.

It was the face of a tortured murderess. Her forehead was twisted as with an intolerable pain, her eyes were glazed with hatred, her upper lip fantastically was drawn back. And she was shaking with silent laughter! That was the most terrible thing of all. She stared straight in front of her, at the wall, and shook with this fearful, devilish laughter. Her bare shoulders quivered, the wrinkles of her bosom were contorted, her neck throbbed. It was too much for Pauline. She turned away and shut the door, taking a little time about it, so that Irela might have time to control herself.

When she turned again Irela was sitting on her seat. She had her hand up to her face, as though she did not wish to be seen. She motioned Pauline to the front seat. As Pauline sat down she noticed that Irela was still laughing. Their eyes met. In a sort of frenzied self-defence Irela whispered, "That wig . . .

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EVENSONG

that wig!" She pointed to Baba. Pauline twisted her mouth to a smile.

"That wig!" It was all that Irela said. It was both pathetic and horrible. Soon the laughter ceased. When the final curtain fell, Irela sat very white and still in the shadow of the box. Then people began to come in, and she rose and said, "Yes, Baba had been marvellous," smiled graciously and proclaimed herself "delighted," until the stalls had almost emptied and the last visitor had left them.

She turned to Pauline. She looked utterly tired . . . there were white patches on her cheeks . . . her eyelids drooped pitifully.

"I can't go to the party," she whispered. "I can't."

"But, darling . . ." Pauline paused. Irela had moved into the light now, and it was very evident that she could not go, that she should be put to bed as soon as possible.

But how? They were all waiting for her. She was the guest of honor. She was expected to make a speech. It would cause terrible ill-feeling among the Italians if she chucked them.

"Don't you think you could just go for a minute?" Pauline asked.

"I couldn't . . . I couldn't." Even now she was supporting herself on the arm of her chair.

THIS was dreadful. Not only was Pauline agitated on Irela's behalf, but on her own. Donald was waiting for her outside. How could she possibly desert Irela now? Everything seemed to conspire against her. For the moment, however, she put Donald from her thoughts. This crisis must be settled first.

"I can see you're tired." She put her young hand on Irela's arm. "But honestly I think you should just go yourself and tell them. . . . I would go, of course. There's nothing I wouldn't do . . . but it wouldn't be the same if I went."

Irela suddenly clutched her arm. "Will you come with me, if I go, and then take me straight home?"

Pauline looked away. Misery descended upon her. That this should happen, now . . . it was too cruel. Donald was waiting. He had ordered supper. He had hired a car. He had told her that he was going to spend a week's savings on their first evening together. She had her little birthday present for him in her pocket. Oh, it was too much to bear! She turned to Irela and there were tears in her eyes. She said:

"I had promised . . ." Then she could not go on. No, she could not. It was not that she was moved by Irela's grief, or her loneliness, nor afraid of the possibility of her anger. It was simply that there was a royalty about Irela, even in this moment of her defeat, which made it impossible to run counter to her wishes.

"That young man?"

"I'd promised . . ."

"You can put him off, darling."

Irela said it wearily, but calmly—as if there were no question about it . . . could be none. Pauline was almost frightened as she realised the power this strange, drooping old woman had over her . . . over everybody. Irela was taking from her the one chance of great happiness that she had ever had . . . taking it from her merely because she was tired and did not want to go home alone. Hot tears of resentment blinded her, but they were not of resentment against Irela, but against this Fate which had somehow dealt her so cruel a blow.

She made a last despairing effort. She said, "I'm afraid it'll be very difficult. You see . . ." But Irela was not even listening to her. She was already outside the door, on her way to make her excuses to Baba.

THEY were holding high revel in Baba's dressing room. It was crowded with the Spanish fraternity, most of them rather drunk, shouting, laughing, waving bottles and little Spanish flags. Piccolo was standing in the centre of the room calling, "Viva, viva!" Sovino was prowling round, pale and excited, never taking his eyes off Baba. She herself bounced from one friend to another, calling endearments in her high shrill voice, utterly entranced, like a child at her own birthday party. Several odd-looking female relations, in rusty black, stood at her side, chattering and gulping champagne. Over the whole noisy, brightly colored gang brooded Kober, his arms folded, watching, a thin smile on his face.

Then the door opened and Irela came in. There was a moment's pause . . . a quick hush. Pauline, standing behind her, saw the whole scene reflected in the multiple mirrors. . . there was a sense that time stood still. There was Piccolo, fixed and immobile, with his little flag over his hand. There was Baba, like a huge mechanical doll that had suddenly run down. And the strange relations in black, like petrified crows. And Kober . . . ah! Kober, he never moved, never ceased smiling, never winked an eye.

It was then that Irela was so superb. For all her vitality seemed to surge back to her in a flood, she lifted her head, stretched out her arms, stepped forward and cried, "My child, you are the greatest Lucia . . ." and burst into highly artificial tears.

It was a master stroke. Baba cried, "No, no! You, you more great, much more great!" Everybody crowded round, some shouted "No," others shouted "Yes." How long the shouting and confusion would have lasted it is difficult to say, had not Kober, at this moment, come out of his corner, still smiling, pushed his way through, laid his palsied hand on Irela's, and said, with a silky sneer, "I can imagine how delighted you must be feeling tonight!"

Irela stiffened and drew her hand away. There was fear in her eyes. It was extraordinary to see such terror on the face of one who was usually so dauntless. "Yes, yes," she said, looking away from him. And then she turned, and was apologising to Baba, and saying how tired she was, and would Baba ever forgive her if she did not come to the party? And Baba saying how desolated she was, but of course she understood. Nobody seemed to mind very much. Indeed, they appeared to have forgotten Irela. It was as though, already, she had been put on a shelf. Before she had even left the room the revelry was at its height again.

"Come straight home when you have seen him," said Irela to Pauline. "I will find a way to the car."

She turned and walked down the corridor. Her head was held high, but her feet stumbled.

PAULINE found him where they had planned, standing in the doorway, the big Daimler waiting at the kerb. He looked radiantly handsome and fiercely happy.

She ran to his arms, she could not tell him . . . not for a moment . . . she must have just these few seconds of happiness.

"Oh, honey! Oh, honey!" He drew her close to him. A fleeting incongruous wonder passed through her mind at their mutual, complete denial of the existence of other people. Here she was, in a crowded street, with a chauffeur watching, and she was behaving as though they were alone in the world. What was he saying? "I couldn't have waited another minute. I've got it all set. We've got the swellest table, we're going to have oysters and the champagne's on ice, and afterwards we can drive till dawn, if you want to, and think we're millionaires, and . . . Oh, gee, I love you like hell." He lifted her face to his. Suddenly he noticed. "Say, you're crying."

"I can't come, Don. I can't come!"

She felt his arms relax, saw the glow vanish from his face.

"What's that?"

"I can't come."

"Why not?"

"It's Irela. She's ill."

He turned away. He was very angry. Yes . . . angry with Pauline. He kicked his toe impatiently against the wall. There were tears in his eyes.

"Say," he growled, "I'm getting to think you love that old woman a darn sight more than you love me."

"Oh, Don!" She was white with grief. But how could she explain? How could she show him this extraordinary hypnotic power which Irela exercised over her, over everybody? How could she explain what had happened to-night?

He said impatiently, "She was at the show to-night. Wasn't she?"

"Yes. But . . ."

"But what? She can't be exactly dying if she can go to a show?"

"It was the opera that brought it on," Pauline began to explain. "You see . . ."

"Oh, I see! Little Miss Baba sang better than she did, did she? And so she pretends to be sick, doesn't go to the party because she won't play second fiddle. And just because she's so damned selfish she says you've got to go home and keep her company and tell her how marvellous she is. Hell! What do you think you are, anyway? A slave?"

Pauline did think she was a slave. She knew very clearly she was a slave. She also knew that she was the most miserable girl in the world.

"Well?" he repeated.

"I can't explain, Don. It's been a terrible night for Irela. . . ."

"Thank God for that!"

"You mustn't say that . . . she . . . the applause was much greater than she got . . . She feels it bitterly. . . . She . . . She's all alone. . . . She . . ."

"She! She! She!" he barked. "Is it always going to be 'she'? And who else is going to be alone, I'd like to know? I'll have a fine time, drinking a bottle of champagne by myself in a night club, won't I?" He glared at her, saw the utter misery in her face, checked himself. "I'm sorry, Pauline. It isn't that I mind that . . . or the car . . . or anything . . . It's just that I do so terribly want to have you with me tonight. Couldn't you come just for an hour?"

"I can't!" she cried desperately. She could not bear to hear the pleading in his voice. "I can't. You don't understand. She's ill. I've got to go. I'd give anything . . . anything in the world. But you don't understand. . . ."

He was not listening to her. He had turned away suddenly. An excited throng of people pushed by them. There was laughter and a great deal of jostling, so that they had to step back in the doorway. Pauline looked up. As she did so, there was a loud cheer, and a brightly lighted car swept by. In it sat Irela, a rich gold cloak around her, a sheaf of lilies in her hand, bowing with a changeless smile to the crowds around her.

Swept by, and was gone. The crowds drifted away. Pauline did not dare to speak. Then he said coldly:

"She didn't look so ill then, did she?"

She felt a quick surge of anger. Why should he speak to her like that? Why should she be blamed for doing the right thing? Why should this damnable Fate always come between her and happiness, and why should things always happen that she was put in the wrong?

"It's not fair . . . it's not fair!" she cried. "You don't understand."

"I don't."

"I can't help myself. I've got to go back. You can't judge by what you saw then. She was acting . . . keeping up appearances . . . she wasn't smiling really . . . it was all show."

"She!"

She made a tremendous effort to keep

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calm. "Don," she said quietly, "if you speak to me like that, it's over. I'm heart-broken about this evening. But . . ."

She could say no more. Her courage seemed to have left her. Timidly she fumbled in her bag. Something had to be done, or she would scream, and the only thing that immediately occurred to her was to powder her nose. As she felt in her bag, her fingers came in contact with a little package covered in tissue paper. Donald's present! For a moment she hated it, wanted to throw it away. Then impulsively she put it in his hand.

"What's this?" he asked gruffly.

She shook her head. She could not trust herself to speak. She only stared at him.

He undid it. The little match-box glistened in the lamplight. With fingers that trembled slightly he turned it over, and read the inscription: "Donald from Pauline. March 26th." Then slowly, strongly, he put his arms round her.

Neither of them spoke. The traffic roared by them, a few feet away, there was the perpetual scurry of footsteps, now and then an arm brushed them, so that they swayed slightly. But they did not speak.

Then he put his hand very gently under her chin and tilted her face to his. "You've got me beat, honey," he said. "I apologise." Then he frowned. "But listen—you've never got to chuck me again, not for the Queen of England. And what's more, you're just going to come for a drive in this car . . . only ten minutes . . . but somehow it's rather too public here to kiss you, as you don't deserve to be kissed!"

SHE lay back in his arms. The car curved, like some sleek, purring animal, through the dark streets that lie between Covent Garden and the Strand. Oh, this was a magic car . . . and a magic hour! They swam into the lights that still blazed from the Gaiety Theatre . . . "Not too fast," cried Donald through the window, and now they were gliding peacefully past the Gothic mystery of the law courts. High, high above them drifted the buildings. She looked up and saw Donald's face, and behind through the glass, the cluttered kaleidoscope of chimneys and roofs, and behind that, the wise cockney face of the moon. She kissed him—a kiss that lasted from the Temple to the Embankment.

As they glided down the Embankment—oh, how short that interminable thoroughfare seemed to-night—she sensed a Venetian magic over the wintry Thames. The faint river mist veiled the vulgarity of the distant sky signs, turning them from crude emblems of commerce to enchanted decorations. The pale letters danced, like fluttering fingers, over the tumbled roofs, drew faint, fiery fingers across the grey waters, lit to quickly fading silver the ramshackle design of docks and sheds. So many things in the swift transit seemed beautiful. Barges ploughing seawards, with grotesque funnels that bobbed up and down the more violently as they encountered the wake of other vessels . . . they were surely steered by spirits from another world . . . spirits born of the oily waters, who had boarded them with dripping thighs and wild glances, and were sending them to destinations unknown! Black, crumpled figures that lay huddled on the benches, like skeleton leaves blown into a corner by a wanton wind, were these really humans in distress? Were they not rather tortured spirits, who had been tossed across the world by an adverse fate? Would they not soon fly away into the night, with shrill cries, like bats at the bidding of an enchantress? Strange thoroughfare of silver and black, over which the bare branches sighed and brooded, a thoroughfare so often dedicated to mourning and despair, but lit for Pauline to-night by a radiance that was not, certainly, evident to the damned ones who huddled on the benches. A radiance none the less real to her, lying so briefly in the arms of her lover.

They stopped at the coffee stall that pitches its tent, like a poor relation, in the shadow of the Savoy. As they stepped out of the car, Pauline glanced at her watch. It was half-past twelve. She did not care. "I feel like Cinderella," she whispered.

He pressed her arm to his. He also remembered, just in time, to adjust his tie.

The coffee stall was crowded. From the swinging lamp on its little roof came shafts of orange light which broke on men's faces, dividing them sharply into harsh squares and triangles, like an impressionist picture. Yet there was nothing harsh about the glances which these humble people gave them. For they saw two young people deeply in love, and they wished them well.

Back to the car. It was nearly over, the little adventure, the tiny romance which life was permitting them. Nearly over. She clung to him, frightened by something which she dare not explain.

PAULINE let herself into the house with a latchkey. She watched Donald climb back into the car, and wave his hand. He was gone. She heard the mournful hoot of the horn as the car turned the corner. Then she closed the door.

She threw her cloak over a chair. The clock struck the quarter, making her start nervously. She caught sight of herself in the glass. How tired she looked . . . and how sad. It was absurd of her . . . there was nothing to make her sad. She loved Donald and Donald loved her . . . no one was going to come between them. . . . No one? The clock seemed to echo the word, ticking, ticking—No one? No one? No one? She shivered. She must not allow herself these ridiculous fancies. They only came to her because it was so late, and because the house was so silent.

Then, as she stood there, she realised that the house was not silent, that somewhere, upstairs, was the sound of music. Who could it be? Had Irela asked people back? As the question formed itself in her mind a wave of indignation swept over her. If Irela was having a party . . . after pretending to be so overwrought . . . after insisting that she should come home to comfort her! Quickly she walked upstairs—then on the landing she paused. . . .

The door of the music room was open, and Irela sat by the fire, staring into it, and on a table in front of her was a gramophone. It was an old one that she had dragged down from the box-room. Normally she would not allow these instruments to be played in her presence—whether because she thought them inartistic, or whether because they reminded her, even dimly, of the voice which was now so rapidly deserting her. Pauline never knew. But she did know that Irela had never played a gramophone before, and the fact that she was now playing one was the clearest indication of the crisis through which she wase passing. For Irela was playing her own record of the Mad Scene from "Lucia," which she had recorded nearly fifteen years before.

Even then, she had been forty-five—just past her prime. The recording was dim and scratchy, yet filled with a wild and pulsating beauty. It vibrated with the mad, tumultuous melody. Pauline, like a ghost, moved slowly into the room and sat down. Irela looked at her, tried to smile, and then stared again, gloomily, into the fire.

The last high note echoed away. The gramophone whirred on, clicked automatically, was still. The roomed seemed to echo with the crazy sweetness of the song.

Then Irela spoke. Her eyes were half-closed and she rocked herself up and down, like a woman who mourns for the dead.

"It was in Paris when I first sang it," she said. "I was twenty-one. There was a cabal against me, and I sang to a house of deaf people . . . they literally shut their ears against me. But gradually they came round, gradually I won them. They jumped on to the stage when I finished. They had never done that at the Opera before. The applause . . ." She waved her hand with a weary gesture. "Baba!" She laughed softly to herself, not a bitter laugh, rather the laugh of one who has climbed to immense heights, has looked down on the futility of the world, and now watches with ironic amusement another who is making the same painful ascent. "Baba will never be given what the world has given to me.

"When I sang it in Russia the students took the horses out of my carriage and ran me through Petersburg. The city was deep in snow and the moon was very bright. When they took me back to my hotel they had brought red roses for me to walk on. . . . So many roses that they covered the snow all over the pavement. I shall never forget how lovely the roses looked . . . they were blood-red in the snow, and the moon shone on them. . . .

"IN Paris it was spring when I sang it, and I was in love. I sang for one man. I believe I sang more beautifully then than I have ever done. I wonder? He is dead now. I am glad he is dead, because I would not like him to hear me now. The rest—they don't matter. The critics know I still sing better than anyone in the world. The audiences are sorry I don't give them so many high notes, but the young ones feel they ought to hear me, just to tell their children they have heard me, and the old ones remember . . . ah, yes, they remember . . . and I can still make that memory live again. . . . But I would not have let him hear me . . . if he were alive. I would never sing again. . . ."

The tears were rolling down her cheeks, but she still rocked herself backwards and forwards. Pauline tried to speak, but what was there to say . . . what was there to say?

"I have had such a wonderful life, Pauline. I have had power . . . such power!" She threw back her head, and the firelight, flickering on the wet cheeks, made them glisten strangely. "I could commit any sin, and be forgiven after a single song. It was like magic, in the old days, like magic. You don't know, you will never know, you are too young; but some day you may meet a man who will tell you . . . not yet, but some day. It was like magic, and it is difficult when one loses the spell." She lowered her head. Clumsily she wiped the tears away with the back of her hand.

She rose to her feet. Speaking with her back to Pauline she said, "Did you see your young man?"

"Yes."

Very slowly, as if were an immense effort to her, Irela said, "I am sorry I . . . I spoiled your evening."

"It doesn't matter." Oh, what mattered, any more, in this house of intolerable grief?

"Yes, it does. It was selfish of me. It shall never happen again. You'll see him soon, very soon." She came back to Pauline, and put her arms round her. No longer did she speak in a sad monotone . . . she cried harshly, with an echo of fierce pain, "Forgive me . . . forgive me . . . you're all I have in the world. . . ."

She clung to Pauline, who stood, white and still, and the firelight flickered about them.

CHAPTER 2.

BUT on the following day Irela's promise that Pauline should see Donald again "very soon," her vow that she would cease to be selfish, and her strange, tortured confession of her own failing powers were all forgotten. When Pauline came down to breakfast she found Irela in one of the worst tempers she had ever seen. Moreover, it was not the temper of a sick woman, for she seemed completely recovered from her fatigue. She looked ten years younger, and had it not been for the angry red flush on her cheekbones, she would have looked almost attractive.

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She had been reading Baba's Press notices, and they were very good indeed—far too good. All around her on the floor were violently crumpled newspapers (Irela could never read a newspaper without making it look as if it had been worried by a puppy) and she had yet to find a single bad notice. It was utterly mortifying.

"These critics have lost their heads . . . mad, they are . . . anybody would think . . ." The rest was lost in a rustle of paper as she discovered a notice she had not read.

Pauline helped herself to some coffee and said nothing.

"The only thing they haven't said," snorted Irela, "is that she's a second Irela! If they printed that, I'd go to law about it. Where's the 'Morning Star'?"

Pauline saw it by her side. She was just going to hand it to Irela when she saw, on the front page, a full-column story headed:

A NEW IRELA
BABA LETOILE'S TRIUMPH

She hastily put her hand over the paper. Irela would have to see it sooner or later, but she infinitely preferred her to see it after breakfast. She stood up, still covering it with her hand, and looked over the littered table.

"It doesn't seem to be here," she said.

"It must be here. I ordered them all." She stared coldly at Pauline's hand. "Darling," she snapped. "You seem to be asleep. You've got your hand on it."

Reluctantly Pauline gave it to her.

"What?" screamed Irela, as soon as she saw the notice. And again, "What?"

"What is it?"

"For God's sake don't talk to me!"

Very well, thought Pauline, for God's sake I won't talk to you. If Irela was going to speak like that to her, she could hardly expect to be answered. She glanced across the table. Irela was hidden behind the newspaper which was already bundled into the shape of a balloon. Only her hands and her legs were visible. Her hands with the heavy diamond rings, were curved like claws. Her legs were crossed, and showed fat, stockinged knees. She was wearing her Russian boots and her right foot beat an impatient tattoo on the table-leg.

"Listen to this," she cried. "Signora Letoile's voice has all the quality of the old Irela, the Irela who, more years ago than it would be discreet to recollect, enraptured Covent Garden. The same Irela timbre, the same astonishing flexibility. The world of music may congratulate itself that a new Queen has risen, more than worthy to seize the sceptre of Song, when Madame Irela chooses to relinquish it."

She read this out with considerable difficulty, so breathless with anger was she. When she had finished, she cried:

"The old Irela. Old Irela. That's pretty, isn't it? And 'more years than it would be discreet to recollect!' And then talking of the Irela timbre. The man doesn't know what timbre is! And the same astonishing flexibility . . . when she hasn't got a trill. She — has — not — got — a — trill!" And each word she emphasised by banging her fist on the table.

"Please . . . please you'll upset something. . . ."

"I don't care what I upset," roared Irela. "She has not got a trill. How dare they talk about her astonishing flexibility? It isn't her fault that she hasn't got a trill, any more than it's her fault that she hasn't got a tail, though, by the way she eats, I shouldn't be surprised if she grew one. But you either are born with a trill or you aren't. I was born with a perfect one. I've had it photographed on the audiometer—I'll show you—oh, no, what does it matter?" She had risen, but she sat down again.

"Then look at this: 'When Madame Irela chooses to relinquish the sceptre of Song!' As though I were standing in her way. Why, nobody would have ever heard of the wretched woman if I hadn't dragged her from her own filthy country, and I wouldn't have done that if it hadn't been for Kober. Kober!" At the mention of his name a light of fanaticism came into her eyes. "It's Kober's doing, that notice. Mark my words. I shouldn't be surprised if he'd written it himself. And in my opinion it's libellous. I'll get Hackerston's advice."

She rushed to the telephone. Almost before she had taken up the receiver she was cursing the operator for neglecting her. She jigged this way and that in her Russian boots, and when she eventually got hold of Hackerston she poured out such a profusion of abuse that he said the only thing for him to do was to come around to see her, to which she agreed.

"I shall be in my room," she snapped to Pauline. "Tell James to send him straight up when he arrives."

HACKERSTON arrived in half an hour. He was a gaunt, lanky Scotsman of nearly seventy, but his hair still kept traces of its original red, and there was a twinkle in his eye, belying the melancholy cast of his features. He bowed slowly to Pauline and went straight upstairs to Irela.

Barely twenty minutes later they both came down again. Pauline, who had been listening breathlessly for the sound of smashed vases or falling chairs, was amazed at the contrast which Irela presented. She was wreathed in smiles, she was coquettish, even girlish in an elephantine way.

"Get me the Savoy on the telephone and ask for Baba," she cried to Pauline. As Pauline waited for the number, Irela trotted round the room, talking baby talk, sliding her feet like a small boy, taking up a new bibelot and saying, "Isn't he twee?" Or, "Isn't it bootiful?"

The number came through. Irela snatched the telephone, and Pauline listened to this astonishing conversation.

"Baba—darling! I'm very jell!" (A high laugh, quickly followed by a frown, a. I an aside, "The damned fool doesn't understand a word of English.") Then again in a crooning voice . . . "Very jealous, darling. Ma el gusto es mio . . . lovely notices. My dear, I can't tell you how happy I am! Too delighted." (Another high laugh.) "Oh, but you deserve every word of it. And I was so flattered when they compared you with little me! Now listen, darling, there are one or two tiny things. I wonder if I could tell you—little hints about your roles—I'm an old woman and perhaps I might be able to help—you know, my method—and then your clothes—would you? That's too sweet of you. Very well, then, at the dress rehearsal to-morrow afternoon. Good-bye!"

Irela put down the telephone and said, "She was still in bed. With Sovino, I suppose!" Then she waltzed round the room, and in her baby voice said, "What fun!" Then she went to the door and said, "Hacky darling, if you've got your car you can drive me down to the city. I shan't be ten minutes. Pauline got to stay at home to do some work."

She left them together.

Wide-eyed, Pauline said, "How on earth did you do it?"

"Just a little moral support!" His eyes were twinkling more than ever.

"No, but please tell me. . . ."

"Well, it's like this." He leant against the mantelpiece and regarded her kindly. "You've got to realise two things about Irela. Firstly that she's an artist. Secondly that she's a realist."

"Well?"

"The two work together in this case. Because Irela's a realist, she admits that Baba's a tremendous success. She mayn't like it, she mayn't think it's justified, but the fact remains, and since it's a fact, Irela faces it.

"We'll go back to that in a minute. But first consider the artist side of it. Baba isn't an artist. She's not a musician, she can't act, and she doesn't know how to dress. But she's in Irela's company. And as such Irela feels responsible for her. She's not going to have her name associated by the few people whose opinion she really respects with anything that's in bad taste—with that wig in the second act of 'Lucia,' for example. Therefore she's going to take Baba in hand."

"Take Baba in hand?" repeated Pauline, in great astonishment.

"Certainly. Didn't you hear her mention her 'method' and her 'clothes'?"

"But it would lead to the most appalling rows."

"Quite." He twinkled at her. Then he continued. "Now about Irela being a realist. Irela's got a lot of money in this opera season. A great deal. As a matter of fact, she can't lose a penny, because I drew up the contract for her. Actually she'll make a great deal. But . . ." and here he winked at her, "she's never averse to making a little bit more."

"How?"

"By putting Baba under contract to her for five years."

"Do you mean to say . . ."

"That's what she just suggested to me upstairs. I think it's a very good idea. If we can get the right contract. The only reason I mentioned it to you was to remind you that you are the niece of a very remarkable woman. An ordinary prima donna, in her position, would be inconsolable. Well, perhaps she is, but she won't let the public see that. She'll cash in while the cashing's good. And yet, all the time, it isn't only the money she'll be thinking of. She'll be thinking of that wig!"

It said a great deal for Irela's capacity as a business woman that, on the following day, Baba signed a contract which entitled Irela to the exclusive use of her services over a period of five years.

CHAPTER 3

IT was soon after Baba's first night that the Kober crisis occurred.

The "Othello" rehearsal was progressing quite smoothly. The first act was over, Irela had not been singing "in full voice." She had merely "hinted" the high notes, to save herself. But her phrasing had been exquisite, her movements had fitted perfectly with those of the tenor, and all seemed well.

When the first act was over she joined Pauline in the stalls, to watch Act Two, in which Desdemona does not appear until comparatively late.

Suddenly she clutched Pauline's arm and screamed.

At once there was commotion. Sovino dropped his baton and swung round. The tenor stopped in the middle of a phrase. The orchestra, after a moment's half-hearted scraping, lapsed into silence. All over the darkened stalls people stood up, staring in the direction from which the scream had come. They suspected that it must be Irela but they could not be sure. It was too dark.

Then she screamed again, and struggled to her feet. In a torrent the words poured from her, half shouted, half sobbed, while she pointed a shaking hand behind her:

"There he is! There he is! Kober! He's going to kill me! He's got a knife!"

Pauline clutched her arm—tried to comfort her—in vain.

"Take him away! Away! Out of my sight! I won't sing again . . ."

Pauline glanced back. Kober was standing about ten rows behind, an expression of puzzled amusement on his face. His hands were in his pockets. He shrugged his shoulders.

Mr. Toma stumbled through the stalls. "Madame, madame, please don't upset yourself . . ."

Tremlowe appeared from the shadows. "M'lady, let me take you to your room . . ."

All sorts of people muttered . . . "It's a shame . . . it's ridiculous . . . What is happening?"

Pauline tried to hold her hand. "Please, darling, please . . ."

But still she cried . . . as she stumbled away through the gloomy arena, casting

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fearful glances behind her, as though indeed she were flying from an assassin. "He'll kill me . . . he's got a knife . . . why won't somebody take him away . . . why won't somebody help me?"

And there, in the dim, sallow light that was reflected from the stage, she stumbled, and fell in a dead faint.

Pauline had only a confused idea of what happened in the ensuing half-hour. She saw Kober struggling violently with several attendants at the back, for Mr. Toms, with a somewhat hysterical gesture, had ordered him to leave the theatre. He refused, not unnaturally, and Mr. Toms, who had worked himself into a state of panic in which he saw the whole opera season ruined, had called for him to be removed by force. It was the most foolish thing he could have done, and it was to cost him dearly later on. But an excuse could be made, even for Mr. Toms. Irela's unreasoned fear had, to a certain extent, communicated itself to those around her. On the stage little frightened groups of girls huddled together, whispering and trembling, as though at any moment Kober might run amok. Even when he had at last been ejected, there was a sense of intolerable strain.

Irela lay in her dressing-room, sobbing and crying as though she would never stop. Tremlowe hovered over her with smelling-salts. John stood pallidly in a corner holding sal volatile on a tray. All sorts of people whom Pauline had never seen before kept darting in and out to know if there was anything t. be done. There was only one thing to be done, and that was to get rid of her obsession about Kober. And this was effectually achieved by Mr. Toms, who burst into the room with the words:

"He's gone and he'll never come back!"

"What?" The effect upon Irela was instantaneous. She sat up, and cried, in anything but an hysterical voice, "Is that a fact?"

"I told him so. I had him thrown out by force."

The color flooded back to her cheeks. "You had him thrown out by force? Tell me . . . tell me!"

Mr. Toms told her. There was not very much to tell, but she insisted on hearing the story over and over again.

"Was he hurt? . . . Oh, I hope he was hurt."

"Not very much," said Mr. Toms, the first time he told the story.

"Well, he must have been a little," said Mr. Toms, the second time.

"I think he was covered with bruises," said Mr. Toms, the third time.

When he told the story for the last time they were all convinced that Kober must be mutilated almost beyond recognition.

There remained the question of what was to be done.

"Of course, he may bring an action for assault," ventured Mr. Toms, with one eye on the sal volatile in case of a relapse.

"He wouldn't dare!" said Irela scornfully. "We know too much about him and his crooked ways."

SHE began to launch into another attack, making wilder and wilder accusations. Fortunately the advent of the doctor forced her to relax. But even while he was feeling her pulse and taking her temperature (both of which proved to be quite normal) she babbled, spasmodically, about the arch-fiend from whom they had so mercifully escaped.

She continued to babble for many days. Gradually, however, she calmed down. Perhaps she realised that she had made herself a little ridiculous, for when the management informed her that it had cost them a thousand pounds to get rid of Kober without causing a scandal, she flew into a rage and accused them of throwing away her money.

Kober returned to the villa in Florence. Pauline often wondered when and where she would meet him again. For she felt that they had not seen the last of him, even yet.

CHAPTER 4.

THE departure of Kober gave Irela a new lease of life. She looked ten years younger. She hummed gaily every morning. She was all smiles and graciousness.

Her appetite, always large, became enormous. She would eat a whole lobster at the beginning of lunch, and then attack with undiminished vigor a wing of chicken, haricot verts, and a large green salad, followed by a chocolate souffle and a large slice of Brie. And she would talk about her food for a long time after she had eaten it.

But on days when she sang, these orgies were taboo. A different Irela was then revealed . . . the old restless Irela who fidgeted about the house, trying her voice, snapping at Pauline, proclaiming the iniquities of salt, which she felt sure would intrude itself, somehow or other, into her lunch.

In spite of these temperamental vapors she was singing superbly. The first performance of "Faust" arrived, and was accomplished in a blaze of glory. Perhaps no greater miracle has been seen on the London stage than Irela's performances in these later days. Pauline would never forget "The Jewel Song" as Irela sang it. The sweet, foolish, frothy music was lifted into a region of pure beauty which would have surprised Gounod himself. And what astonishing physical agility she displayed! As the chorus of this song developed, with its trills and roulades, Irela's body seemed to shed its age, to become supple and flexible. High above her head she held the mirror, swaying this way and that, lightly and delicately her hands turned the jewels around her neck, and as she took the high B flat at the end, she ran across the stage as she sang, and twirled round with such grace that the audience stopped the performance every night with their applause.

Then, one day, when the stream of Irela's life seemed running merrily, when the Press and the public were playing up perfectly, Irela returned home with a black face.

"Come upstairs," she snapped to Pauline.

Pauline followed her, wondering what had happened.

Irela banged the door after her. Then she turned round and said:

"I've just been to that fool Bliss."

Pauline remembered their former visit to Bliss, when he had examined Irela's throat. On that occasion Irela had said he was the greatest throat specialist in the world. He had attended her for forty years. And now she was calling him a fool. This was indeed astonishing.

"But I thought . . ."

"Do let me say what I'm going to say!" Irela was evidently very nervy indeed. "He says I've got to take things easy."

Pauline caught her breath. "Not . . . not your voice?"

"No. Blood pressure."

"My dear!" She stepped forward impulsively. But Irela waved her away with a petulant gesture.

"Don't fuss, darling!" Then, seeing that she had spoken a little brusquely, she added, in a less harsh voice, "It's nothing."

"But . . . but does it mean you won't be able to . . . to finish the opera season?"

Irela turned on her with flashing eyes. "No, it does not!" She stood quite still, staring at Pauline as though Pauline had insulted her. Then she turned away again. "It's nothing," she laughed a little bitterly. "At least, it's only old age."

The light caught her profile. Her head was held very high. Her whole poise was defiant. Yet Pauline noticed, with a pang of sympathy, that her hands were trembling violently.

"So she is going to defy it, to defy the inevitable," she thought. "And she is afraid . . . though she will not show it." She realised that all her tact, and all her understanding, would be called upon in this emergency.

Irela sat down. She looked very tired. Pauline came up to her.

"Won't you tell me what Bliss said?"

The words came out jerkily, with long pauses in between. "He said I had high blood-pressure . . . two hundred . . . he put a sort of machine on my arm and tested it . . . it ought to be about a hundred and sixty . . . I don't understand it . . . I've never felt better in my life. . . . Then he said I ought to cut down my roles and only sing once a week for the rest of the season. . . . Of course, I can't possibly do that . . . he's a fool. . . ."

"But if he says it. . . ."

"He's a fool! Fool! Fool!" She stamped her foot angrily. "No . . . he isn't a fool. But he doesn't understand my will power. Nobody understands that!"

"Oh, my dear, I'm terribly anxious."

Irela looked away. She put her hand quickly in Pauline's. "Thank you, darling, there's no need to be."

Then she rose to her feet. "I've got a great deal to do." Her voice was brighter now. "Pills to take, dietings, and lying down, and heaven knows what else."

"I'll help . . . I'll do everything that's wanted."

"I wish you could, darling, but you can't."

"But surely . . ."

"He says I have to have a nurse."

"Oh!" Pauline could not prevent her face from falling.

"It's the damnedest bore I've ever known."

"But . . . must you?"

At that moment the incongruity of the whole situation came home with full force to Pauline. Here was Irela, who that very night would be enchanting a vast audience as Desdemona . . . drifting across the stage as a slim virgin in her teens . . . here she was, announcing the fact that she was an old lady who had to have a nurse. A nurse to see that she took her medicine . . . to watch her temperature . . . her diet. A nurse, because she was an old lady with high blood-pressure . . . and soon she would be painting her face, and lifting up her lovely voice in supplication to Othello.

"It's either that . . . or . . . or . . ."

Irela could not finish the sentence. She only held her head higher still. Her neck was rigid, and her hands tightly clenched. Then she closed her eyes, for she would not let the tears come . . . those tears which were more of wounded pride than of self-pity. Pauline could find no words to say. Soon Irela, her eyes still closed, motioned her away. And it was thus that Pauline left her.

FROM the first moments, Irela bitterly resented the presence of Nurse Phillips. She was a bright little woman of about forty, with red hair. She was rather short-sighted, and wore gold-rimmed glasses, or, as she called them, "pince-nez"—which left a red mark on her nose when she took them off. She was a Canadian, and that seemed only to increase Irela's prejudice. She snapped at her, flatly declined to obey her instructions, and daily sought means to thwart and embarrass her.

Nurse Phillips, however, refused to be brow-beaten. Nothing that Irela did or said was able to affect her active and perpetual brightnes. She was bright by birth, and her profession had only given an extra polish to her natural disposition. She went about the house humming little snatches of hymns, occasionally bursting into words, which were always of the brightest possible character, describing angel hosts . . . (she

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pronounced it anejell) . . . clustering round glittering thrones, disposed upon pearly floors.

Irela would encounter her humming in the corridor, would pause, glower at her, and say:

"Trying to teach me to sing, eh?"

Whereupon Nurse Phillips would break into the brightest of laughs and leave Irela for once in a way defeated. It was terrible . . . like trying to argue with a sunbeam.

CHAPTER 5

PAULINE was of the breed of women to whom loyalty is a curse.

Most women have a spark of it, and many have a fine flame—a flame which burns in countless homes. Often enough it is the only light that burns there—the light to which children turn instinctively, and the light which no man can put out, though he may curse it, try to stifle it, or turn away from it utterly. And in some women this loyalty to a person or an ideal is so intense that the flame consumes them . . . burning up their lives in sacrifice to drunkards and bullies and cheats. A useless sacrifice, you may say . . . and in a sense you will be right. All sacrifices are useless, when the smoke has blown away, when the offering is charred and the flame is dead. Yet the bright glow of that flame may flicker on, far into the years, in the memory of some man's heart, and may guide him in the dark ways that lie before him, though he knows not whence the light has come.

Pauline was obviously in very great danger by reason of her loyalty to Irela, and unless that loyalty is admitted and understood, her subsequent actions are meaningless. In the theatre, during the first thrilling performance of "Boheme," she had turned to Donald and said, "You see . . . the enchantment, the spell she has over you?" And Donald had agreed, unwillingly, hating that enchantment. But it was not only magic that held Pauline to Irela, even if we grant Irela's uncanny power of domination, her astonishing capacity for getting her own way. It was not, indeed, Irela who held Pauline by her side. Pauline held herself.

AND then Donald asked Pauline to marry him.

It was snowing, and they were standing at the entrance to the stage-door of the Imperial Theatre, where Pauline had gone on business for Irela. The doorway was deserted, for it was early afternoon, and by contrast with the distant bustle of the Strand the little street on to which they were looking seemed strangely quiet.

She was glad of this quiet, glad, too, that it was being enhanced by the snow, which fell so stealthily, as though its delicate tiny feathers were playing a secret game of their own. Often she had wondered where he would propose to her. She had not wondered very urgently, because they had both taken it for granted that they would marry sooner or later. But she experienced a strange tremor of relief when he spoke, for she had feared that he might choose some place which was wild and strange, where the careful little arguments which she had prepared to put before him would fall on deaf ears. Here she felt that she might speak and he would listen.

He asked her quite quietly, not even looking at her. "When are we going to get married, Pauline?"

She put her hand in his and stared out into the snow. "Some day."

"To-morrow?"

"Of course!"

"I'm not kidding, Pauline."

And as she turned to him she saw a pair of grave, serious eyes. She looked away again, nervously. "Don't be absurd."

"Is it absurd to want to marry you?"

"Well, no . . . at least, I hope not. . . . But we've got to think about it a little first."

"What have we got to think about? Don't you love me?"

"Of course. But . . ."

"But what?"

She laughed hopelessly. "Darling, you are being rather difficult. You can't marry somebody as though you were merely asking them to lunch."

"I'm not marrying 'somebody.' I'm marrying you. And I don't see why we shouldn't marry straight away."

This discussion was not developing at all as she had expected. To gain time, she said, "You've never said anything about this before."

"No. But, then, I didn't realise till yesterday what a hold Irela had over you."

"Oh, I see." She spoke very quickly. At all costs she wanted to keep Irela's name out of this. "Yes . . . of course . . . but that was nothing, nothing at all." She searched for arguments. Then she said, rather abruptly, "What should we live on?"

"I'd make a hundred dollars a week. . . . I often do. . . ."

"Yes . . . but where?"

"Why . . . any place . . . I run around a bit, I guess. . . . Still, you could come with me."

"You'd have double travelling expenses. . . . I'd get in the way. If you were married, instead of just jumping into a train and going after some story, you'd stop and wonder whether you ought to come home . . . and you'd miss the train."

He laughed. "And wouldn't I be glad I had missed it."

"Don . . . we've got to think of these things. . . . I want you, but I want a home, too . . . and we've got so much time."

"So much time!" He was not laughing now. "And you say that!"

"Besides . . ." she added desperately, for it now seemed impossible to keep Irela out of it any longer, "there's Irela."

"Ah!" He folded his arms, and the corners of his mouth turned down. "Now we're getting to it!"

"Don . . . please don't be angry. . . ."

He did not answer her. She shivered. What a strange proposal this is, she thought, with neither of us able to speak our real minds, and the snow falling, falling! Like the third act of "Boheme." . . . And as the thought came into her head it seemed as though thin strains of music floated down the street, and the snowflakes danced in time. And through the white-laced air a pale limelight seemed to flutter its fingers, tingeing the dancing flakes to a silver-green which had a quality more of the theatre than of life. "Yes," she thought, "there is nothing theatrical about me. I am really a very ordinary creature. If things were different, I should be saying 'Yes' to Donald, and preparing to set up a home, somewhere, anywhere, and looking forward to having babies, and loving them." Her eyes filled with tears. No longer did the snow seem to fall as a sweet benediction. A bitter wind had found its way into the street, and was stirring the flakes angrily, marring the pale pattern of their fall, stinging them to wild confusion. She closed her eyes. She heard Donald saying:

"I'm glad you mentioned Irela. Because she's obviously the whole problem."

"How do you mean?"

"You know quite well. You feel you oughtn't to leave her."

"Well, darling . . . in the middle of the opera season. . . ."

"I wouldn't care tuppence about the opera season if I thought you'd come to me when it was over. Will you?"

Instantly Irela seemed to rise before her. She saw the stern, angry old face, that she both loved and feared. Would she go to Donald as soon as it was over . . . in a mere six weeks? She dared not answer the question. She would try . . . oh, indeed, she would try, and she prayed that strength might be given her, in order that she might obey the impulse which was telling her to run straight to his arms. Meanwhile she must pull herself together. She prevaricated. She said, with assumed levity, "I may get the sack long before then."

"Do you really think that?"

"No. But still . . ."

"Supposing she never wants you to leave her?"

"Oh—but that's impossible."

"Are you sure?"

"Why . . . of course." But somehow she said it hesitantly.

"Whom else has she got to look after her, if you go?"

"Well . . ." she paused. Then she said: "There would be heaps of people, only too glad. After all . . . there are hundreds of secretaries . . ."

"There's only one Pauline."

She smiled. "Thank you."

"And she knows it!" There was a bitter tone in his voice which made her turn towards him sharply.

HE put his hands gently on her shoulders. "Listen, Pauline. You mustn't think me jealous or alarmist or anything like that. But I don't think you quite understand the situation. Irela's sixty, or thereabouts. It's as dangerous an age as there is for a woman . . . especially a woman like her. She's the loneliest woman I've ever met. You could see that in her eyes if you knew nothing about her life. But I do know something about her life . . . perhaps more than you. She's got nobody. Nobody loves her. She's got a few old relations . . . they bore her to death, they don't mix with her friends, they only hang around because of her fame. There have been lovers, vaguely—but, as far as I know, they've all gone . . . though they say there is still one somewhere . . . however, the fact remains that she's alone in the world except for a lot of silly society people, who don't really accept her, who never have accepted her . . . who only asked her to their houses because she might sing for nothing. . . ."

"Oh, Don!" She looked at him reproachfully. "You're being terribly cruel."

"I'm not. It's all true," he protested. Then, more quietly: "I shouldn't be so scared, Pauline, if you weren't so damned nice, so unselfish, so loyal. Before long, you'll find her playing up to that loyalty . . . taking advantage of it . . . no, please let me finish what I want to say . . . the facts stare you in the face. Here's Irela, intensely lonely, intensely possessive, accustomed all her life to getting her own way. And now, in this crisis of her life, she's found you . . . and she's found in you someone whom she can treat as a substitute for the daughter she always longed to have—you didn't know that, did you?—and at the same time get every ounce of service and companionship out of you. . . ."

"Don . . ."

"I'm nearly through. All I want to say is this: If she's possessive now, when she's still singing, when her whole mind's occupied, what is she going to be when the season is over, when she really faces retirement at last?"

"Why . . . she'll . . . I'll . . ." Then she stopped. It was as though she had come to a blank wall, across which the one word Irela was written. She told herself that it was all absurd . . . that she was tired, excited, abnormal . . . that she loved Donald, that these imaginary fears would all vanish in the morning. She could think of nothing to say, except, very unsteadily, "I shall go on loving you . . . that's all."

And then he put his arms round her. Little flakes of snow fell from his shoulders on to her hands. The touch of his cheek was icy . . . yet it warmed her, fired her. He said:

"Oh, darling . . . we're young, young! And we'll never be young again. One day

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this snow will make us cough and shiver and draw close to the fire, whereas to-day it only seems like the beginning of an adventure. It seems so friendly . . . doesn't it . . .? Look at it!" And he turned and pointed to the drifting flakes. But quickly his eyes sought hers again.

"Don't keep me too long, darling . . . don't keep me too long."

There was pain in his eyes. It was still there when she answered with desperate gaiety:

"I'll only keep you six hours, Don. You haven't forgotten that you're coming with me to 'Othello' to-night?"

"No." He spoke dully.

"And that we really are going to have supper afterwards?"

He smiled—a strange smile.

"And now I must go."

They said good-bye almost formally. She sat very still in the taxi, and her eyes were closed.

WHEN Pauline walked into Charles Street, an extraordinary sight met her eyes. At least, it was extraordinary in view of the fact that Irela was singing that night. For the room was crowded with people. She was giving a cocktail party!

Pauline stood in the doorway, amazed. What was the explanation of it? Had Irela forgotten that she was singing? But no . . . that was impossible . . . they had been talking about it for at least an hour that very morning. Had she gone mad? But no . . . she seemed to be not only sane, but in the highest spirits, moving rapidly in and out of a crowd of smart people. Pauline felt completely at a loss. She had expected to come back to a quiet house, hushed and expectant . . . to find Irela lying down, preparing for the night's ordeal . . . wondering whether Mrs. McPherson would put salt in the omelette . . . wondering whether Dingley's neck would be red . . . wondering whether the fiendish Kober would turn up with a hostile claque. But now, she seemed to be wondering about nothing at all. She had just snatched a mixed yellow glass from John and was standing by the fire, with one hand on her hip, laughing flirtatiously to a group of somewhat passe gallants.

Then she saw Pauline.

She put down her glass and came towards her. Seizing her arm, she stepped out into the hall.

"My dear," she said excitedly, "it's that damned Nurse Phillips!"

"But . . . but what has she done?"

"She's killing me!" She said it fiercely, although the effect of her denunciation was weakened by a bright smile and a greeting to a late-comer. . . . ("Go in there, Bernard, darling, and get toxy-boo, I'll be along in a minute.") Then she turned to Pauline again. "Killing me!"

Pauline looked at her. Then she looked past her, through the double doors. She supposed that all this gaiety was, in some way or other, a subtle reply to Nurse Phillips' domination . . . a sort of revenge. And Irela's words, the next moment, confirmed her suspicions.

"Fuss, fuss, fuss! Like a governess! Have I taken this? Have I taken that? And always singing hymns! God . . . those hymns She'll turn me into a raving atheist before I'm much older. Then, this morning, after you left me"—she looked at Pauline with an expression which seemed to suggest that she had been cruelly deserted—"and when I was all alone, with nobody in the house . . ."

"I had to go to the theatre for you," interposed Pauline in self-defence.

"I know, darling. I was saying, she came in and wanted to take my blood pressure! Said I looked flushed. Me! Me! I told her something. I gave her a talking-to she won't forget in a hurry. And as soon as I'd finished with her, I sat down at the telephone and I rang up all the friends I could think of."

"But, my dear, you know you're singing to-night!"

"Well, what if I am?"

"But you always rest."

"I'm sick of resting."

"And you never drink anything."

"You're as bad as Nurse Phillips!" she snapped. "I'm only having a cocktail. Desdemona having a cocktail!" This last remark she cried out shrilly to an old man who, at that moment, came through the doors, bent over her hand, and made his smirking adieux. When he had gone, Irela gulped her cocktail defiantly.

"Why shouldn't I?" She drew herself up proudly. "Heavens, anybody would think I was a hundred, the way you talk. 'Othello's' nothing to me . . . nothing! I can take it in my stride." She stared at Pauline, as though expecting to be contradicted. "When I sang it in the old days I never worried! I did things far more exhausting than drinking a cocktail, ten minutes before I went on the stage!" A rather unpleasant glitter came into her eyes. "Why should I worry now?"

Pauline, hesitantly, said, "Of course, you know best."

"Thank you for that!" Her voice was extremely ironic.

Pauline felt hurt. "I was only thinking of you. I was only anxious that you shouldn't over-tire yourself."

Irela melted. "Darling! Don't take me too seriously. I know what I'm about. Now don't let's bother about it any more. I want to go and enjoy myself. It's an early party. I'm shoving them all off at six."

She took Pauline by the arm and steered her into the room. They passed from group to group. Pauline had a swift impression of old faces and rich furs . . . the whole room smelt of mink and lilies, and it echoed with cracked voices. There passed before her a panorama of yellow withered necks, with velvet bands round them, and diamond clasps at the back. She smiled into a succession of faded violet lips, clasped a number of slim gloved hands through which the bones could be felt crackling.

Pauline feared for Irela as she had never feared before. She was thankful when the tall Empire clock on the mantelpiece struck six, sharply, maliciously . . . for Irela was true to her word, and with a great many trills and flutters shooed them out of the room.

The strange assembly crowded out. The room was dense with cigarette smoke. Most of the tables were marked with little rings and pools where the cocktail glasses had been set down.

Irela did not come back into the room. Indeed, there was not time for her to do so. Pauline only had a glimpse of a flushed face, and a stream of purple tulle as she swept towards the lift. She wondered what was in store for Nurse Phillips. Most of all she wondered what was in store for the audience at the opera. For the role of Desdemona in "Othello" is calculated to tax the strength even of a young soprano.

Young! The word made Pauline flinch. The very idea of youth in this house seemed grotesque. She went to the window and threw it open wide. The snow had stopped, and an icy wind was rising. It blew through the room like a knife, cutting the purple layers of smoke into fantastic shapes.

Pauline shivered. Then she shut the window again, and went up to dress.

CHAPTER 6.

VERDI was eighty when he wrote "Othello." The first act might have been written by a young man exulting in his youth . . . seizing his pen and recording at top speed the fierce storms of melody that assaulted him, ruffling his hair and stinging his blood. It is riotous, windy music, and though the land over which it blows has long since been charted and tamed by later composers, it was a new land when Verdi discovered it, and he noted its beauties with wild and undimmed eyes.

The last act is ageless—beginning as it does with the "Willow Song," that has the radiant simplicity of a folk tune, and ending with the "Ave Maria" . . . that luminous prayer that is like a white candle burning.

But over the two middle acts there broods a horrible senility. The melodies are sickly, like a lecherous old man's caresses . . . directed by no vital impulse, but by the memory of sweets of long ago. The declamations are dull and turgid, as though the aged composer were sitting by the fire, muttering over grievances that had long ceased to exist save in his own weary head. The drama echoes thin. Here is no giant's voice, splitting the air with brutal disdain. Rather is there the sense of an old man standing in a doorway through which he cannot pass, seeing the tragedy, tortured by it, but able only to wave his impotent hands and utter his querulous complaints. For the musically unimaginative, these two acts of "Othello" are sheer horror . . . there is a world of weariness in the feeble moaning of the wood-wind, the flickering spasms of the strings, the silly, empty beating of the drums.

And it was this curious unequal opera, so utterly out of tune with the currents of modern musical thought, that Irela had chosen for her final bow to the great public! She was to sing it, in all, four times. Pauline, sitting silently in the car by Irela's side, had a strange premonition that she would not sing it more than once.

THE troubles of the evening were initiated, once again, by a contingent of extremely young and irreverent persons who were occupying the seats immediately in front of Pauline and Donald. Their conversation echoed towards Pauline's ears like a knell of doom.

"My dear, wait till she's singing the 'Maiden's Prayer'!"

"The 'Ave Maria,' darling."

"Sorry . . . in a lovely nightdress, too. Did you see what Patrick wrote in his gossip column to-day? That it was an old family nightdress?"

"Darling, it was. . . . She told me so herself."

"But it sounds so obscene—a family nightdress—like 'Father says turn and we all turn.'"

"Everything's terrifically 'family' in this act. She's got real linen sheets on the bed simply covered in monograms."

"How awful if she swallowed a monogram and died before Othello choked her!"

"She'll have choked herself long before that with her own voice. It's too fantastic. Singing Desdemona when one's grandchildren are romping all over Eastbourne sands."

"Much more likely to be romping all over Le Touquet."

"I adore it. I'm all for very old people doing everything so long as we can lie back and watch them. I want Fanny Ward to sing and sing, and Mary Garden to rush about till her knees crack, and I'd like to see them die in the very act. . . ."

"Too disgusting you are, Binny. Necrophiliac!"

"I've always been necrophiliac. That's why I came here to-night."

Pauline could stand it no longer. She turned to Donald. "Please . . . please say something. It's unbearable, the way they're talking."

Donald had not been listening so intently as Pauline. He had caught only the last few sentences. He leaned forward and gripped the arm of the young necrophiliac. At that moment the lights went down, so that Pauline was not quite sure what had happened. But when the first act was over, the young man was still extremely pale, and apart from a few disgusted glances in their direction, the little group gave them no more trouble for the rest of the evening.

HAVE you ever been in a theatre tenanted by the dead? No. That is a rhetorical question which should not be demanded by any self-respecting author. Yet the question twisted itself through

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Pauline's brain during the two dreadful acts which followed.

Irela was singing badly. That was a fact which had to be faced from the moment that she made her first appearance. Only rarely did the lovely spell proclaim itself, and almost immediately it was broken by some obvious flaw . . . by a labored effect of breathing, by a soft note sung mezzo-forte, most of all by the tell-tale "woody" quality of her middle register. She was singing the right notes in the right place, and that was about all that could be said for her. As for her appearance—she looked like a tired old woman, grimacing with obvious effort into the face of a man young enough to be her grandson.

This was a tragedy which Pauline had foreseen, and, because she had foreseen it, the blow fell with less immediate weight. When she arrived at the theatre she was already numb with apprehension. The behaviour of the young persons in front of her had not girred her out of this lethargy. But now, as the second act rolled on and on, with ever emptier echoes, with an increasing tension on the part of the orchestra, and with a more obvious strain on Irela, Pauline began to be seized with a cold cramp of fear.

"Like a story by Poe," she whispered to herself. She had not realised the tension to which her nerves had been strung. "They're all dead . . . dead." She stared around her, and indeed there seemed evidence for her assertion. The people in the boxes were like dimly lit waxworks. The dress circle was a row of limp cardboard figures. Immediately behind her was a stagnant sea of masks. Even Sovino, waving his conductor's wand, was an automaton, who might at any moment collapse and shrink with a whirr of wheels into his cardboard box.

HER face was very white when, after the third act, she threaded her way through the stone corridors outside the dressing-rooms. She was not sure why she was going to see Irela at all. Yet she went. She was glad she did so. It brought her back to reality.

Nurse Phillips had arrived, just in front of her. Pauline slipped in, smiling wanly at Irela, and watched the little comedy progress. Nurse Phillips stood in the entrance to the dressing-room, and on her face was an expression of high, wrought brightness. She was completely unmusical . . . so much so that she did not even dislike music, it was only a blurred and ridiculous sound to her. But she was determined to do her duty to her patient, which was to encourage her, to give her moral support, on all occasions. This was such an occasion. And so she said, in a hard, professional voice:

"It is quite beautiful!"

"On the contrary, Nurse Phillips! And what is more, I don't want any damn fool compliments from you, Nurse Phillips. I've got a sore throat, and I know it."

"A sore throat!" Instantly Nurse Phillips retrieved her self-respect. When people had sore throats she was at a premium. All nurses are at a premium when people have sore throats. Nurse Phillips drew herself up.

"You must spray it at once!" she said. "I have the atomizer and the antiseptic solution." She bustled over to the dressing-table. "I only brought just a teeny weeny little bottle, but . . . ha, ha! it will destroy all the microbes that even you have been able to collect!" She wondered if that sounded quite polite, but she had not time to put it more politely.

"I've got no microbes!" Irela almost yelled the words. "It's not any microbe that's troubling me, thank you! All that's the matter with me is that I've been singing top C's for the past two hours while you've been lounging back in the stalls eating nougat! That's all that's wrong with me . . . the fact that I've been earning my living, to keep you . . . so please don't come in here trying to make me frightened about microbes!"

"One should not neglect a sore throat. One should . . ."

"Shut up!"

Nurse Phillips closed her eyes. She was probably summoning the assistance of some of her "anejelic." At any rate, a much brighter expression came over her face. For she had a sudden idea. She opened her eyes, and sniffed. Stared round the room. Sniffed again.

"What the devil are you sniffing for?"

"There's a most peculiar smell," said Nurse Phillips brightly.

"Then go outside the door, and there won't be."

Still more brightly Nurse Phillips said. "Are you sure that the drains . . . after all, in an old theatre like this . . . one never knows."

At which Irela finally flared up. "Drains!" she cried, switching round in her chair, and confronting her with a face that gibbered beneath the thick paint. "Here am I just going on to sing the 'Ave Maria' and you come in and dribble about the drains."

"Well, really. . . ."

"Yes, really! What do you think the 'Ave Maria' is? Eh? A prayer to the sanitary inspector? What do you think I want to be thinking about when I sing it? Drains? Perhaps you'd like me to sing it with a clothes-peg on my nose?"

"I mean to say . . ."

"You mean to say nothing! When I want you to run this opera, Nurse Phillips, I'll send for you! When I want you to put a hot-water bottle in Desdemona's bed and have me suffocated with an antiseptic pillow, and sing the 'Ave Maria' with a eucalyptus lozenge in my mouth, I'll send for you! Meanwhile you can get out! Drains!"

Nurse Phillips got out. Irela threw her powder puff at the closing door. "She'll kill me . . . she'll kill me!" Then she noticed Pauline.

"I'm sorry, darling," she said. "Don't come near me now. I'm not fit for it. It's been an awful evening. Come round for a minute with your young man after it's all over."

YET, the "Ave Maria," as she sang it half an hour later, was a thing of impeccable beauty.

It was too quiet, too radiantly simple to create a sensation. The audience had been bored during the last two acts, and nothing would rouse them again. There were many empty seats, including those recently occupied by the group of irreverent young persons immediately in front. Pauline had never seen such a thing at an Irela night before, and it struck her as an evil omen. Yet all forebodings and all misgivings were wiped out by this exquisite song.

She sang it kneeling, in a dim light. The pose was kind to her figure. The long white robes gave her an appearance of slenderness. The shadowed light softened her features. And when she began to sing, Pauline knew that the little boy's voice, the voice of the cherubim, had come back.

This was the crystal essence of song . . . of a purity that was luminous. It was the innocence of it that was so heart-breaking . . . the pleading innocence . . . the little boy with hands uplifted, and a light on his face that was not of this world.

After the "Ave Maria," the brief and tragic end, and the ravings of Othello seemed meaningless. The huge curtain swung down to half-hearted applause.

True to her word, Pauline took Donald round to call on Irela afterwards. Already the dressing-room was tightly packed with people.

It was the first time that Donald had beheld Irela holding court in this manner. It was a revelation to him. For he saw what Pauline had never clearly seen, that all these people who crowded round her were sycophants.

There was, for example, the Irish contingent, sharply divided into two classes, the poor and the rich. The poor were distant relatives, sons and daughters of second and third cousins. They spoke with Irish accents, usually in short and worshipful sentences, and they were very punctilious about their behaviour, especially when there were any titles about. The rich were generally climbing nonentities who used their neighborly blood as a means of introduction to Irela, hoping that they might be asked to some party where Royalty was present. They did not understand, in the least, why this countrywoman of theirs seemed to be so important, but they read in the paper that she was constantly the intimate of princes and ambassadors, and for that reason they cultivated her. There was no knowing what doors Irela might not open, if she were properly approached.

Then there were the poor English aristocracy, including a quantity of middle-aged women whom Irela, at one time or another, had adopted as travelling companions. They always bore some title, for Irela, when she was making her tours, would never travel with a plain Mrs. or Miss. She had long ago discovered that advance publicity was greatly helped by the paragraphs which appeared in the local papers: "Madame Irela, by the way, is accompanied by Lady Blank, who is, of course, a sister of the Earl of Dash." It gave to her programmes a gilt-edged appearance, and insensibly increased the gulf which separated her from the rest of the world.

To-night, they hung around in even larger numbers than usual. The opera season was drawing to its close, and if Irela was to prove of any substantial value to them she must be more firmly attached. This year, they reflected, she seemed to have been a little elusive. And more than one of them thought that Pauline was responsible. Pauline, they whispered, never left Irela alone. She would not let her out of her sight. A cunning little puss, they judged her to be. But a person to be propitiated. So they all made a point of speaking to her, edging their way through the crowd, and asking her all sorts of ridiculous questions to which they had no desire to have an answer.

They all spoke very loudly, hoping that Irela would hear them. Thus, though many of their remarks were addressed to Pauline, they did not look at her when they spoke, but stared with assumed rapture at Irela. Their remarks had therefore a recitatif quality, which gave to the sound of the chatter a curious unreality.

"Such a privilege for you, dear Miss Joycey," boomed one of the ex-travelling companions.

"Yes, indeed."

"When I think of the marvellous tour we made through Canada . . ."

In an even louder voice another ex-travelling companion chimed in, "But it could not have been more wonderful than our South African adventure. . . . Ah, to think that those days may never come again!"

The two ladies glared at one another, then quickly assumed bright smiles, and riveted their eyes with fierce adoration on Irela.

From this noisy and unattractive gathering Donald at last drew Pauline. There was a reproachful look in Irela's eyes as they went through the door.

"I WANT my answer now, Pauline."

She looked up at him. They were sitting in that strange caravanserai, the Savoy Grill. It was long after midnight, and there were not many people there. The waiters, obeying the law which has killed British hospitality, had removed the drinks, and those who supped were confronted with bottles of water.

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"I'm being the strong he-man, you see," he continued. And yet there was weariness in his voice. He did not know why. He had meant to be ardent, possessive, to carry her off her feet. As it was, he was almost yawning. Not that he loved Pauline the less . . . it seemed that there was a blight over everything.

He leant across the table. "The day after the opera season's over, we get married. Money or no money. Irela or no Irela. Yes or no?"

There was a long pause. Then Pauline said:

"If Irela . . ."

His fist came down on the table. He was really angry now. "Damn it, Pauline, you'll drive me crazy."

She started violently. There was fear in her eyes. Quickly she put her hand on his.

"Darling, you didn't let me speak."

He drew his hand away, and folded his arms. There was a scowl on his face. "I know what you're going to say."

"I was going to say 'yes.'"

"Yes . . . if . . . always if . . ."

She spoke very patiently. "It's a very little 'if.' It was only if Irela was well . . . if she were not actually ill, I mean."

He turned round. His expression was no longer angry, only puzzled. "But she's as strong as a horse."

"Yes." She was not looking at him.

"Why, Pauline . . . darling," and now all the eagerness had come back to his voice. "Do you realise you've practically accepted me?"

"You don't seem to realise it!" She smiled through her tears.

"But you have. By God, I'll keep you to that. 'If she isn't actually sick.' Those were your very words. Gee . . . let's have a drink. Damn . . . why don't they have Prohibition in this country so that we'd be able to drink at unreasonable hours?"

"We'll drink to it in water."

They raised their glasses.

As he gulped the water he suddenly paused. "Say, there's no catch in this?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean Irela hasn't suddenly come out in a rash, or anything?"

She laughed. "Not that I know of. Why?"

"I wondered why you made that particular condition."

"It's just a —" she paused for the right word. She did not want to say "foreboding." Nor did she want to say "suspicion." That would make Donald unhappy. So she evaded the point, and said, lightly, "I just want to have an absolutely clear conscience, that's all."

"Pauline, you're a saint." His eyes were moist. "Honest . . . you're a saint." He gripped her hand. "Why you don't bore me to death I don't know."

"I may do, one day."

He shook his head absent-mindedly. He was thinking. "You've got to fatten that old dame up," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"You've got to see she takes her medicine, and wraps her chest up, and gargles, and is regular in her habits."

"Nurse Phillips sees to all that."

"She'd get sick just to spite Nurse Phillips. No, Pauline, it's up to you. . . ."

And thus, with a fanciful cosseting of Irela, Donald entertained her. In his imagination Pauline already belonged to him.

CHAPTER 7.

PAULINE had not summoned up enough courage to tell Irela about her promise to Donald. She wanted first to be sure that Irela was in a good mood. And nowadays good moods were few and far between.

Not that Irela seemed in any but the best of health. She had already told Campbell Bliss that she had no more need of Nurse Phillips, and though he had refused to allow that lady to depart until he made a thorough examination, it looked as though Nurse Phillips would shortly leave them.

But with the apparent return of her vitality, Irela became more irritable than ever. The criticisms of "Othello" had been lukewarm. She was angry . . . actively angry. There was no sign of depression, only of an aggressive energy.

"Oho! Ho, ha! He, he! Very funny. Very funny!" She seized a paper. "'Her flawless method, from which she has never swerved, stood her in good stead in this arduous role.' As though I were an old boxer who'd lost his wind but hadn't forgotten his tricks! And here's another one: 'Whatever may be said of her fitness for the rest of the opera, nobody could deny that the "Ave Maria" was a perfect example of the almost lost art of bel canto legato.' Those three words are the only Italian that damned critic knows. And the reason he only mentions the 'Ave Maria' is because he came in tight in the fourth act. But this is the prettiest of all: 'There was an obvious effort to surmount the high and difficult passages in which the first part of the opera abounds'"

She crumpled the papers together. "Take 'em away . . . away . . . away!" she cried. "They make me sick!"

Pauline did not realise that all this storm and fury was the sign of an acute nervous tension . . . a tension which was extremely dangerous in view of the high blood pressure with which it was combined. Had she been able to share Irela's thoughts, she would indeed have been anxious.

FOR Irela was now the prey of horrible obsessions.

Sitting there, in that historic boudoir, with its tiny clocks ticking away the dizzy minutes from shells of coral and jade, she brooded over the golden past which had drifted into so drab a present, and seemed to be curdling to so menacing a future. She would sit and sit, occasionally throwing back her head, to stroke her uncertain chin, and as she sat, cross-legged, she would swing her foot backwards and forwards, until the fur-lined shoe slipped from her foot and slid over the parquet flooring. Then she would rise and stamp unevenly across the floor, push her foot into the slipper, and stand, breathing deeply, listening.

Listening to what? To the clocks that ticked, ticked—ticked away the tinsel moments with their tiny hammers? To the slow, sad hum of the London which had once been hers—which might still be hers if only she were wise? Or to the soft, dragging footsteps of the nurse outside, who was cringing down the corridor towards her, bearing an amber-colored tonic on a tray?

Three days after "Othello" Pauline decided to tell Irela that she was going to marry Donald.

It was really Donald who decided it for her. They were dining together again, in a cheap little place in Soho.

"Have you told her yet?"

"No."

"You've got to tell her tonight, then."

"Oh . . . Don."

"To-night. See?" He looked at her grimly. "What sort of mood did you leave her in?"

"Well . . . it wasn't really so bad, I suppose."

"She's gone to bed, hasn't she?"

"I don't know. She was lying down when I went out. She seemed quite affectionate . . . rather absent-minded. She asked me to be in early."

"Well, you shall be. Not a minute after eleven. And if she's gone to sleep, you'll wake her up."

Suddenly she surrendered to his delicious domination.

"Yes, Don . . . yes. . . . I'll do anything you say . . . now and always."

They stared wide-eyed at each other. They were both trembling. They were both tingling with a beautiful desire. But a mist came over Donald's eyes, and he bent his head.

"These things don't happen," he whispered, brokenly. "Life doesn't give away its prizes so easily, Pauline. Or if life gives you a prize, you get run over by a bus when you're carrying it home. God, I love you. God, I'll kill you with love one day."

He pressed her hand till she could have cried out with pain. But it would have been a happy cry, for she wanted him to hurt her.

At ten minutes to eleven, he left her, a few hundred yards from the house in Charles Street. She wanted to walk alone for a brief space, to calm her nerves.

A DARK and icy wind assaulted her as she turned her face towards home. It stung her cheeks, caught at her throat, sealed her lips in a cold caress, tore at her skirts till she felt naked before it. The street was empty, and in spite of the speeding wind, with its thousand echoing laughs, and the noise of its havoc in the roofs and the alleys, she could hear her footsteps, tap, tap, tap over the hard grey pavements. As though she were taking part in some grotesque parade, running the gauntlet of many watching windows, that stared at her with cold, dead eyes.

The street seemed endless. On and on she walked, and the wind caught at her as though it were trying to send her back. It seemed to be hissing some message into her ears . . . some message that it was vital for her to hear. When at last she reached Charles Street, she felt battered and exhausted. But she would not swerve from her purpose.

What was that noise?

She stood in the hall, stock still. In her hand was the fur which she had taken from her neck. She had just been going to put it down when that shrill scream had echoed through the house, causing her to start and listen, her bosom heaving.

Was it the wind? It must have been the wind . . . for even this hall, that was normally so quiet and still, was filled with the moaning and the whistling from outside. She wet her lips. Mechanically she dropped the fur on to the settee, and turned to walk upstairs.

Then she stopped. There was the scream again. And now there was no doubt as to its origin . . . it came from Irela's throat, and it was the scream of a woman in desperate alarm.

Pauline caught her breath. Then with a stifled cry she ran upstairs. Her limbs were heavy with the cold, and she clutched at the bannisters to steady herself.

In the entrance to the music-room she stopped dead. She had expected to see a scene of violence . . . of robbery or assault. But the room was quiet and dimly lit, and at the far end, Irela stood alone. Her mouth was wide open.

Trembling with a nameless fear, Pauline stepped forward, into the shadow of the great Coromandel screen that stood by the entrance. From here she could see without being seen, hear without being heard. And what she saw and heard appalled her. Like some tortured and vehement priestess invoking a god who heard her not, Irela stood there—her arm outstretched, her face tragic and contorted, her lips wide and taut. The pale and callous firelight flickered around her, and black shadows jutted from floor to ceiling. But all the senses of sight and form were lost in the single sense of sound—the agonised, violent sound which came from her throat.

The whole room seemed to shrivel before that sound. High and shrill, it stabbed the darkness. Pauline, shrinking in the shadows, felt as though she were being physically assaulted, as though she were being cut by a lash of tattered melody—a lash that paused, faltered, and then swept down again with a fierce and cruel bite. And then again—silence—dead, utter silence—and a sense of intolerable pain.

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Irela stepped forward. From her hiding-place Pauline could see her profile. She seemed abandoned to some appalling grief. Her eyelids were swollen with tears, her mouth was trembling and agape, her proud chin was sunken in folds of flesh. Her body seemed listless, as though it were not strong enough to support the folds of the yellow satin dressing-gown that hung and curled about her. As she moved slowly over the shining floorway she was as one who advances to the sacrifice. The room resounded to her desperate breathing.

SUDDENLY her old pose changed. Her head lifted, her eyes lightened, her hands fluttered aloft. And as she opened her lips, Pauline felt that some obscene wooing was in progress. . . .

The voice came again . . . caressing but cracked. The old lips were twisted to the symbol of love, but they trembled with weariness that weighed them down. The words were words Pauline could not recall. . . . "Oh bien-aime, ne sois pas trop tardif!" But they were made hideous by the gasps that accompanied them, and the gestures to which they echoed. For Irela's shoulders were hunched and her hands were crooked . . . the whole pose was a dreadful parody of youthful supplication.

And quickly it was abandoned. Quickly she stood erect again. Now the face was grim, set in an intolerable mask. Anger possessed her. She shook with it. She advanced slowly in Pauline's direction, across the polished floor, her shadow following her.

"Ah—ah—ah!"

She stamped forward. Her hands were rigid as steel. Her face was crimson.

"Ah! Ah!"

Shriller and shriller the voice rose. Now all beauty had flown affrighted. Now all was discord. The room rang with the horror of it.

"Ah!"

It was a hateful, vulgar scream—the scream of a coarse, affronted woman.

Pauline rushed forward.

Never, as long as she lives, will Pauline forget those few seconds which followed. She stood there, wide-eyed and trembling, only a few feet from Irela, her hands outstretched in a dumb and pitiful protest. And Irela faced her, tense with fear and hate, like some animal that has been trapped before its kill. . . .

"What are you doing here?"

"You mustn't—you mustn't. . . ."

"Spying, eh?"

"Please . . . darling . . . your voice. . . ."

"My voice is my own, isn't it?" Irela retreated, like a panther before it springs.

Pauline closed her eyes for a second. She suddenly felt unutterably weary—robbed of all vitality—hopeless. . . .

"It's just . . ."

"Just what?"

Then Irela seemed to collapse. She leant against the piano, a grotesque, absurd figure, and with her fat hand she played a chord which sharply echoed through the room. "You're like all the rest of them," she said. "You think I can't do it any more." She switched back her head and a shrill, hoarse laugh came from her throat. "Can't do it any more—can't do it any more." She was suddenly silent. Her head drooped, her lower lip seemed to shoot forward and her eyelids fell together . . . there was a sudden moan, and her fingers strayed sadly into a popular tune to which she sang "I can't do it any more, any more, do it any more. . . ."

Suddenly the tune stopped. Both her hands were stretched rigidly before her.

"Pauline . . . Pauline . . . my hands . . ."

Pauline ran to her. "What is it . . . oh, darling . . . what is it?"

In a voice of utter terror, a choked voice, she cried:

"Can't move my hands . . . can't move . ."

She fell back on to the chair. Her heavy shoulders weighed against Pauline's young arms. Her swollen eyelids fluttered. . . .

The hands remained rigid.

PART III.
THE LOVER.
CHAPTER 1

NURSE PHILLIPS was beginning to feel the strain.

She had been in her element for the brief period when Irela had lain, pale and silent, in her darkened room in Charles Street. Her patient, then, had been powerless to resist her . . . could not refuse her medicine, could not even find the strength to curse her as she bustled round the room, humming her favorite hymns, with their frequent reference to "anejells." She could only lie back, following her with eyes that brooded sullenly.

But Irela, after these few days of inertia, began to recover with a speed than astonished even Dr. Bliss. "I expected a quick recovery . . . I didn't expect a miracle," he said, a few days later, allowing her to eat oysters. And this tribute from Campbell was a tribute indeed. For he knew her iron constitution of old. He also knew that her collapse, outwardly alarming, was not of serious organic importance. The ugly phenomenon of the stiffened hands, which had so horrified both Irela and Pauline, was dismissed by him as a nervous reflex, which indeed it was. There was no question of a stroke . . . nor, as Irela suggested—having a penchant for royal diseases—of apoplexy.

Campbell's diagnosis, in fact, had been so prosaic that Irela resented it. "High blood pressure, aggravated by over-eating, and brought to a pitch by doing at least six times more than you ought to do at your age. Also, you've got a tooth that's poisoning your blood stream. If you rest, eat what I tell you to, go to the dentist and have the tooth out, and take a dose of salts every morning, you'll be singing better than ever by the summer. If you don't you'll soon stop singing altogether . . . unless it's with Nurse Phillips' angels."

The reference to Nurse Phillips had brought on another outburst.

"I won't have that damned woman in the house another minute," she cried, tugging her lace cap over her forehead.

"Oh, yes, you will," said Campbell.

"Spying on me!"

"Which is what she's paid to do."

"And singing hymns like a housemaid who's just been saved."

"Well, you don't have to pay her for that!"

"Very well, Campbell Bliss, we'll see who gives way first."

With these ominous words the discussion ended for the time being. They boded ill for Nurse Phillips.

How ill, she was not to discover till a certain Channel crossing, some two weeks later.

IT was the beginning of May, and she, Pauline, and Irela were en route to Dover in a special compartment. Irela was in a talkative mood.

"It's really marvellous, Pauline, darling, how well everything has arranged itself! I only missed four performances . . . of course, that was a tragedy, with so many people disappointed, but still, it isn't as if they will never be able to hear me again . . . and the season was the most amazing success . . . though naturally any money I make will all be taken by the income-tax man . . . and though I would have adored to do the final performance, it'll have to wait . . . perhaps next year . . . after all, I haven't really given my farewell yet."

"Next year," echoed Pauline. She was looking out on to the fields that drifted by . . . fields that were bright with buttercups . . . fields that suddenly disappeared, to be hidden by banks that were misted with early bluebells. And she was wondering if she and Donald would ever walk through such fields together. She had hardly seen anything of him in these past few weeks. Irela had claimed all her attention. A fleeting walk, now and then, through the grey park, under trees still sullen with winter's mood . . . and a single wonderful evening when they had sat together by the fire . . . dreaming. But all these dreams seemed shadowed by the difficulty of life as it had to be lived. Or were the difficulties of her own making? She wondered. All she knew was that she seemed to be going very far away from him, and that her whole being was blighted with a sense of frustration.

DONALD, contrary to her expectations, had made no difficulties. He had not tried to hold her to her promise. When he first heard of Irela's collapse he was alone in his own bedroom, and the cursing and kicking had been worked off there. When he again saw Pauline he was reconciled to the fact that their marriage must be postponed.

"But the minute it's safe to leave her . ."

"I'll come, Don, indeed, I'll come. But I can't even tell her about it yet. Bliss says she must have no shocks."

"Gee . . . and it'll be a shock, all right," he had said.

And Pauline, listening to Irela in the train, was inclined to agree.

"It was so right of Campbell to suggest Paris," continued Irela. "After all, it isn't as if I were really ill, or as if I needed the least attention . . ." and here she cast a hostile glance at Nurse Phillips. "There's nothing in the least wrong with me really, as anybody but a ridiculous fuss-pot would realise." She gave a final glare at Nurse Phillips, and then switched back to Pauline. "It's all nerves, that's what it is. And heavens, if anybody has a right to them, I have. When I think of all I've gone through in this season. However . . ." she checked herself, and a look of childish joy came into her eyes . . . "Paris will cure all that, Paris! Darling . . . how I long to show you Paris . . . it's going to give me the greatest pleasure . . . to show you the room where I almost starved when I made my debut in 'Romeo' . . . and the street I used to walk along to take my music lessons."

CHAPTER 2.

THOUGH it might be an exaggeration to say that it was Paris which caused the beginning of Pauline's revolt from Irela, it is certainly true that very soon after their arrival she began to feel the strain of her position as she had never felt it before.

And she wondered, too, if she herself was unbreakable—asked herself how long she would be able to stand it all. It was the first time she had ever put the question into words. And even though the words were unspoken, the fact that they echoed through her head made her realise that a crisis was impending.

It came the next day, with a letter from Donald.

"Half Moon St., W. 1, May 3rd.

"Darling Pauline,

"How are you, sweet? Do you love me, you blessed thing? Are you being faithful to me or are you bouncing about on the knees of a lot of amateur Napoleons? I'm being faithful to you, all right, in spite of the housemaid, who follows me about with a wistful expression and tells me she'd do anything for me. Jealous, darling? Please say you are. I'm jealous of everything that touches you, animal, vegetable, or mineral.

"Listen.

"You and I are going to the South of France at the end of the month. May twenty-third, to be precise.

"Please don't argue. I thought I'd better just put it down in black and white

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so that you'd be able to recover your breath before I begin explaining ways and means. We're going. See? If I had you any closer I'd take you by the neck and shake the life out of you till you said 'Yes.'

"This is how it's going to be done. I've managed to save a little money. I got a scoop for the 'Clarion'—I'll tell you about that in a minute. Anyway, I've got a hundred pounds and it's gone right in the bank and it isn't going to be touched till I give it to you on the train in Paris. You can take charge of it. All I shall want is a franc now and then to buy you a rose. I love you.

"This isn't, by the way, an abduction. I don't guarantee that you won't be abduced, or whatever the word is, one day. But I've got a sister coming along. Sister Jane, if you don't object to the name. You'll fall for her, Pauline—she's a peach. Same lovely features as me, but with a nicer soul. She's a buyer for Macy's department store in New York, and she's coming over to look for fabrics and things. She's got to go to Paris middle of May, and she'll be free from the 20th for ten days. She knows all about you—in fact, she's probably gotten sick of hearing your name. I love you.

"So there you are. What d'you say about it? What? Now look here, it's no use rolling those baby eyes at me. You're coming. See? What? What's that about Irela? If I hear you mention that old . . . pardon me while I fill my fountain pen with purple ink. Seriously, honey, you've got to break away from that spell, sooner or later. It is a spell—like an enchantment. I know there's been an excuse, and a damned good excuse, on each of the times when she's put a spoke in our wheels in the past. For all I know, she mayn't have put a spoke in our wheels at all—it may just have been Fate. All I say is, if she has that sort of effect on our Fate, you've got to escape from her. I know you're as loyal as hell, but she hasn't got an exclusive claim on your loyalty, my angel. She can let you go for a week. She will.

"Oh . . . if you knew what this meant to me. May in the south of France! We'll take tickets to Monte Carlo, and wake up early in the morning—we get to Marseilles at about eight—and we'll have our coffee and when the train stops at any station we like the look of, we'll just get out, and sit on our suitcases on the platform, and laugh. And it'll be blazing hot, and gee . . . the flowers! We'll find some little hotel by the sea, and we'll park Sister Jane in a dark corner, and then I'll put my arms round you and . . . (Here a long sentence was laboriously cut out.) It's all right. Don't take any notice of that mess. I didn't say anything a gentleman shouldn't. Just something that might have made you a bit too Ritzy, that's all. Also there was a bit about the blue mountains and the sunset, and that didn't sound too good.

"You'll come, darling, won't you? You will? Gee, that's wonderful. That's great. And now that you've agreed, you've got to promise that nothing will stop you—not even if Irela gets stuck in a drain and wants you to pull her out, not even if Irela gets locked in the attic and you're the only person who's got the key, not even if that old chauffeur's neck turns purple with large blue spots on it, not even if Irela's screams and yells arpeggios of abuse . . . damn it, why am I talking about Irela when I only want to talk about you? I never meant to—she just seemed to fall across the page, like a shadow. . . .

"Now, put on your sweetest smile and your most determined expression, take a double brandy, and go in and tell her what you've decided to do. Don't take no for an answer. Tell her that if she doesn't let you I shall come and assault her. No. Don't tell her that. She'd probably like it—a handsome chap like me. Tell her that if she doesn't let you, you'll leave her for good. You'll kill her. You'll kill yourself . . . anything. Tell her spring's in the air, and the birds are mating. No, don't tell her that, 'cos she'd think we weren't going to be moral, and oh, hell, we'll be moral all right. Anyway, tell her you're coming!

"I love you. I love you. I love you. In case you didn't hear, I'd like you to know that I love you.

"Donald."

"By the way, the 'Clarion' scoop was pretty good. Queen of Bosnia on top of a bus. Heard she went for bus drives, noticed she always took the same bus, stalked her a little, observed profile of bus conductor, swell profile and a naughty twinkle in his eye, and oh boy, the love look in her eyes when she's paying him the penny! Don't call me a cad. I wouldn't have done it if she hadn't been the cruellest woman in Europe. I could tell you things about that dame. . . .

"By the way, did I, by any chance, mention the fact that I love you?"

PAULINE put down Donald's letter and stared straight in front of her. She felt wildly happy, and terribly afraid. Happy because of the adoration which he had laid at her feet, afraid because the idea seemed so fantastic, so incredible. Would Irela ever consent? Would she consider it, even for a moment? And if she would not, what was Pauline to do? Was it to be a choice between Donald and Irela? And if she chose Donald, and if Irela sent her away, what would happen—how could she live? And was she even certain that she would be strong enough to choose Donald?

She put her hand over her eyes. "Oh, he's right," she said to herself. "He's absolutely right. I am under a spell. It is like an enchantment. And it isn't only Irela, it isn't always her fault. Fate seems to fight against me—as though some force outside us were unwilling that we should ever come together."

She pulled herself up with a start. Here she was already, prophesying failure, assuming that Donald's plan was bound to fail through. This would never do, this passive attitude. She glanced through his letter again, to give her strength. As she read it for the second time she realised that behind the playful words there was a firm and almost violent purpose. If she failed Donald this time, there was no knowing what might happen . . . she might lose him for ever. She must not fail him, she must be strong. He was absolutely right in all his arguments. It would be ridiculous, too ridiculous, if Irela stood in her way this time. She could not be so cruel, so perverse.

What was it that Donald had told her to do? She read from the letter, "Now, put on your sweetest smile and your most determined expression, take a double brandy and go in and tell her." She did smile, very sweetly, when she read that, though her expression was still far from determined. And she said to herself, "I will have a little brandy . . . it always makes me feel warm and exhilarated. What's more, I'll have it now. And then I'll go straight in to Irela and get it over."

She tiptoed to the dining-room. There, on the sideboard, was the brandy—Biscuit Dubonnet 1870—in a nice bottle with a faded label. Gingerly she poured herself out a liqueur glass full. As she lifted it to her lips she paused. Was that somebody coming? What on earth would Irela say if she discovered her drinking brandy at this time of the afternoon? She would think she had gone quite mad. She gulped it down quickly, repressed a sneeze, listened again. There was nothing. The only sound came from the wind in the shutters.

There! That was better. A warm glow pervaded her. She felt far more optimistic about the whole business. Perhaps another brandy? Perhaps that would make assurance doubly sure? "Assurance doubly sure." As she whispered that phrase to herself she quickly decided that she would not have another brandy. "Assurance doubly sure." An extremely difficult phrase to pronounce. However, she could pronounce it. This was therefore the exact psychological moment at which to approach Irela. While the warm glow still persisted, and before she found any difficulty in pronouncing "Assurance doubly sure." Not that this phrase was likely to play any very prominent part in their conversation.

She walked firmly down the corridor and knocked at Irela's door.

"Entres!"

She went in. Irela was lying on a chaise-longue. She was wearing her tortoiseshell spectacles, and a book was reposing on her lap. Over her shoulders was a pale pink shawl of delicately knitted wool. She looked, in this light, like a comfortable, amiable old lady.

"What is it, darling?"

Pauline looked at the letter in her hand. Before she had time to speak Irela said, "Shut the door, darling."

She shut it.

"Is it stuffy in here?" said Irela.

"Perhaps . . . just a little. . . ."

"Then would you open the window? No. Not there. At the top. No. Don't pull that cord, silly. The other one. Oh, dear—I suppose I shall have to do it myself. Ah—you've got it at last. You must learn to manage these French windows, darling. They're really simplicity itself."

All this was delivered in the most amiable tones. Pauline sat down on the end of the chaise-longue. Again she was about to speak, when Irela said:

"Don't you think there's a draught?"

"I don't feel one."

"Oh, but, my dear, there is. Quite definitely. I'm afraid we'll have to shut the window again. No. I know what. Just shut it half-way and then we'll put the screen round the chaise-longue. No, silly, only half-way. Oh, dear! Now it's stuck. You mustn't tug at the string so. It's perfectly simple. All you have to do is just to pull, quite gently, and then it slides up. If you tug it, it's bound to stick. Really, my dear, what are you doing? I never have the least trouble. There! Now for heaven's sake, leave it. Only, draw down the blind first, for a minute, because the sun's in my eyes. No. Not right down. We don't want to sit in the dark. No . . . just a little bit higher. What? It won't stay in that position? Well, tie it, then. No, silly, there's a knob on the right. All you have to do is . . . ah! that's got it. Now do leave it alone."

Again Pauline returned to the chaise-longue. Irela looked at her reproachfully. "I thought we were going to have the screen," she said, "to keep me from the draught?"

"Oh—of course."

Pauline went to fetch it. "I think your mind's wandering a little, darling," said Irela.

WANDERING! Pauline's mind was wandering indeed. Knobs, screws, blinds, cords, draughts, screens! She had come in, full of a fiery purpose, and now she felt like a rather incompetent housemaid. Oh, dear . . . the spell was working again, the enchantment. Yet, why should one use such magic words for so trivial an occasion? Spell! There was nothing uncanny in having to pull down a blind for a fussy old woman. And yet, in some way, it was uncanny. She could no more think of refusing to obey Irela, as she lay there, than she could think of insulting the Queen of England at one

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of Her Majesty's Courts. Yes, it was uncanny, this sense of royalty that pervaded the shadowed room. And as she moved the heavy screen across, her hands were trembling violently.

"Be careful, darling, you'll upset it. No, you see, it's caught in the rug. No, darling, lift the other end. Do look where you're going, you nearly upset that vase. What? You've pinched your fingers? Well really, there wasn't any need to do that. Not the least need. You shouldn't hold it so chimsily. No, more round to this side. Do be careful, darling, or the whole thing'll fall down. Why don't you lift it? Oh really—do use your brains, dearest. You know perfectly well that it doesn't fold out that way. Now leave it. No, it's perfectly all right. Of course it's in the right place! Surely I ought to know whether I feel a draught or not. No, it should not be nearer. We've got it right at last. Do for heaven's sake, let us have a moment's peace!"

All this, again, in the most amiable tones.

Once more Pauline sat down.

"Have you been out, darling? How well you look! Such bright eyes!"

"No. I haven't been out."

"Oh, dear . . . what a pity. I thought you might have some news for me. I get so dull, lying here all alone."

"I have some news, as a matter of fact."

"No! Tell me!"

Pauline produced the letter. Now, come what may, she would state her case.

"Just a moment, darling." Irela appeared not to have noticed the letter and to have forgotten all about the approaching news. "I think the door could be open, just a tiny bit, now that we've got the screen." Like an automaton, Pauline rose and opened it. "No. Not as much as that, or we shall be blown out of the room. Just about a foot. Like that. Put a chair against it. No, darling, that's no use, you'll have to put something the other side, too. What? Well, there are plenty of chairs in the dining room, aren't there? There . . . that's better. Just a minute, though, it'll rattle against the backs of the chairs. Put something in between. Darling! Not that lovely brocade. Really . . . that's a museum piece . . . you can't go stuffing it up against the door like that . . . no, anything. What? Well, there must be lots of things, if you'd only use your eyes. Take that little cushion . . . no, not the petit point, take the one I use in the car . . . and for the other one you can use the rug over the sofa. There! we've got it at last. Aren't we clever? I feel quite comfortable now, and I don't think there's a sign of a draught."

Pauline returned and sat down.

"Oh, but your news!" cried Irela. "Why don't you tell me what your news is?"

BEFORE any further interruptions could be suggested, Pauline stammered, "I've had a letter from Donald."

"Oh!" Irela looked like a disappointed child. "Is that all?"

"It's rather an important letter."

"Is it? Why?" She sounded acutely bored.

"He wants me to go away with him . . . just for a week . . . with him and his sister."

"Really!" Pauline dared not look at her. It was as well that she did not. Irela's face wore none too pretty an expression at that moment.

"Really!" she repeated. There was a sneer in her voice and she rolled the "r" ironically. "And what is to become of me, while you're away?"

"That's what I wanted to discuss." Pauline, try as she might, could not prevent her voice from trembling.

"Is there anything to discuss?"

Pauline raised her head. She looked at Irela piteously. Anything to discuss! When one is in love . . . so deeply in love . . . and when the way is open! Perhaps there was something in her expression which caused Irela to pause, something reminded her of a light that may have shone in her own eyes, many years ago. For she looked away quickly, snatched her book, hunched her shoulders, drew in her feet, and pretended to read.

FOR a moment there was silence. Then, still holding the book in front of her eyes, she snapped, "Do as you please."

"It would be only for a week." Pauline's voice was very faint.

"I said, do as you please."

Again, silence. Irela ground her teeth together. Her passionate sense of possession—the strongest motive in her life—had been outraged. She did not care whether Pauline was with her or not—no, perhaps that was not quite accurate—she would miss her dreadfully, even for a week. What she did care about, and care most bitterly, was the fact that Pauline was to be shared with someone else, someone who loved her, and whom she loved.

"You're angry." Pauline stared fiercely at the carpet. But she only saw a blurred, swimming pattern.

"Oh, no!" snorted Irela. "Not in the least!"

"Only for a week," whispered Pauline.

"What did you say?" snapped Irela. She had heard perfectly well, but she wanted to embarrass Pauline, she longed to confuse her, distract her, humble her. "What did you say? Can't you speak up?"

Pauline repeated her remark.

"Only a week!" echoed Irela. "That's very amusing. Ha! Ha! Only a week! And may I ask what I'm to do? In the very middle of the season? Completely alone in Paris?" She spoke as though she were a young homeless girl from the country about to be suddenly deserted in Montmartre at midnight. "Who, for example, is going to attend to my correspondence?"

"There wouldn't be so very much of it . . . I'd work all night when I got back."

"Not so very much of it!" This seemed to Irela like a veiled attack upon her popularity with the public. "Why, look what came by the very last post!" She waved vaguely in the direction of the escritoire.

Pauline walked over to it. She picked up two letters. Somehow the sight of those two letters changed her mood, in a moment, from a miserable terror to a sullen anger. She said, "There are two letters. One is a circular asking you to an art exhibition, the other is a bill."

Irela, to save her face, clutched fiercely at the word "bill."

"Another bill!" she cried. "I'm snowed under with bills." Then, abruptly, "I suppose you want me to pay your fare."

"I want nothing of the sort." Pauline spoke very sharply indeed.

"Oh I see!" crooned Irela, with affected sweetness. "He's going to do the paying, is he? He's come into money, I suppose?"

"Would you mind not discussing him?"

"Would I mind what?" blazed Irela. She struggled up in her chair with more energy than grace. "Would I mind what?"

"I think you heard what I said."

"Yes. And I'll trouble you to hear what I say . . ."

What might have happened then—to what appalling lengths might this conflict have led them, nobody will ever know. For, as they sat there, staring at each other, there was a knock at the door. They both started violently.

"Qui est la?"

"Tremlowe, m'lady."

Irela darted an angry glance at Pauline. "Come in."

Tremlowe came in. She bore a telegram on a silver tray. Irela snatched it. "You needn't wait." Tremlowe went out, casting a mournfully sympathetic glance at Pauline as she closed the door.

"My spectacles," snapped Irela.

Pauline was hot with anger. She longed to hurt Irela—yes—to hurt her.

She said, "If you aren't able to read it, I'll read it for you."

Irela gasped. This was an insult. Her hands quivered with rage. This was mutiny. She said in a hoarse voice, "I prefer to read it myself. My spectacles, please!"

Pauline, who had got far beyond the trembling stage, said, "They are on the table by your side."

Irela stared at her. At any moment she felt she might explode. Then she put out her hand to the table, so violently that the spectacles fell to the floor. She looked at Pauline again, mutely commanding her to pick them up. Pauline looked away.

"No, No, No!" Pauline muttered to herself. "I will not pick up the spectacles. Not even to save my life will I pick up the spectacles. Not if the President of the French Republic offers me eight thousand legions of honor will I pick up the spectacles. Not if the Prefet de Police marches into the room with nine hundred and forty thousand intoxicated gendarmes will I pick up the spectacles. I will not-not-not pick-pick-pick up-up-up the-the-the spectacles-spectacles-spectacles!"

Small, white, icily aloof she sat there. And then, not by sight or by sound, but by instinct, she was conscious that Irela, with a snort, had bent down and picked up the spectacles. Conscious, too, of Irela's voice saying, in its most fearsome accents, "Will you please be good enough to leave the room? When you have recovered your temper and your manners, you may return."

PAULINE sat down at the little desk in her room and wrote to Donald.

Darling,

The situation is rapidly becoming impossible. I'll come with you whatever happens.

We have just had a terrible row . . . the first row we ever had. I don't really know what it was all about, but I went in to tell her about your scheme, and she said hateful things, and then she asked me to pick up her spectacles, and I wouldn't. It all sounds too silly for words, but it was actually rather frightening. I still feel very shaky, which accounts for this wobbly handwriting, and I have locked the door in case. . . . What we should have done to each other if Tremlowe hadn't come in with a telegram, just at the crucial moment, I can't imagine.

I will go with you whatever happens. I haven't told her about the marriage yet, but I shall find a time. Even if I don't, we can get married in the South and present her with a fait accompli. After what has happened to-day one would think that she would never want to see me again, but the awful thing about it all is that she does love me, and that I do understand her, and have, even now, so much pity for her. And we must never forget, darling, that if it had not been for her we should never have met.

Here I am again, making excuses for her, while my hand is still trembling with anger. But I feel I'm a different person now, Don . . . from now on. I feel life is going by so quickly all the time, and that I would rather have a few days of life with you than an eternity without you.

I wish I could write as prettily as you do. You know how to put yourself on paper, I can't. Besides my brain is wandering . . . and all the time that I'm trying to write sensible things and make plans, I'm framing ridiculous, indignant replies to some of the accusations Irela hurled at me.

You don't love me any more than I love you. Bless you, darling. I wish so much that you were here.

Let me know all about dates and tickets. I shall buy a map to-morrow.

My love always,

Pauline.

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Pauline had only just laid down her pen when there was a knock on the door, and Irela's voice outside, crying, "Darling!"

She put the letter quickly under the blotting-pad.

"Yes?"

"May I come in?"

Pauline paused. This was extraordinary. For Irela's voice was neither angry nor pleading. It was merely bright . . . with a hint of archness.

She walked to the door and opened it.

Irela bustled in, smiling. She waved the telegram which was in her hand, and as she sat on the bed, she broke into a high laugh.

"What cross-patches we were! Like two old cats! Darling . . . we must never be so silly."

"No." Pauline spoke tonelessly. She stared out of the window.

"You're not still angry, are you?" There was genuine surprise in Irela's voice.

"I was a little . . . hurt."

"Oh, my dear . . . you mustn't take these things so seriously."

Pauline turned to her. "You don't seem to realise that I was in earnest."

"But of course . . . of course I realise."

"Then . . . what about it?"

"You must go," cried Irela eagerly. "Naturally, you must go."

"Oh!" Pauline was so surprised that she could think of nothing else to say.

"Well . . . aren't you glad?"

"Yes." Then she added hastily, "Thank you very much."

"You see," said Irela, "it all fits in perfectly."

"Fits in?"

"Oh, I forgot . . . this telegram . . . I hadn't told you. It's from somebody who . . ." she paused, and sighed and looked down at the carpet.

"Yes?"

Irela giggled, and then winked portentously. "Never mind," she said mysteriously. "It's from somebody who means a great deal to me . . . somebody whom I haven't seen for ten years. And to tell you the truth, darling, I shan't mind if you are out of the way for just a little while. . . ."

Pauline stared at her. Wonders, she felt, would never cease, as long as Irela was about.

CHAPTER 3.

IRELA'S telegram gave Pauline a great deal to think about. Though its contents had not been divulged to her, she naturally concluded that it was to announce someone's arrival. And Irela's mysterious hints had left no doubt that the "someone" was a man.

Who is he? Where is he? Was he already here? And would she ever see him?

Pauline instinctively shrank from asking herself this last question. There was something frightening in the thought of Irela as a woman in love. Yet she could not help asking it. There were so many signs—strange, disturbing signs. Fascinated, Pauline found herself watching Irela . . . her comings and her goings. She was consumed with curiosity. And yet she dreaded the idea of finding out.

Irela had never spoken to her of any lovers. That there had been many, rumor often whispered, but Pauline knew Irela well enough to guess that rumor lied. Her voice alone was proof enough of that. It was the very breath of chastity. A dissolute woman could not have sung as she sang.

Yet, might not a voice lie? Once she had hinted at this question to Kober, before his total estrangement from them, and his reply, though illuminating, was not entirely satisfactory.

"I always thought her affairs rather comic," he said.

"But what do you mean by that word . . . affairs?"

"Nothing very much. Nothing certainly that could be quoted in a divorce court. Ah! I see you're relieved. Surprised, too? Eh? Yes . . . I suppose it is surprising, considering how much Irela eats. Women with keen appetites for food usually have keen appetites for other things. Irela hadn't . . . at least as far as I know, though naturally she did her utmost, as a self-respecting prima donna, to persuade the public that she had quantities of lovers. For instance, there was a boy called Arthur Clarke, who wrote poetic dramas, which was a pity, because he was a pretty boy who ought to have done nothing. He was like a flute obbligato—as sweet and as meaningless. And there was Tori, who was a sculptor in California, until he met Irela, when he threw down his tools at her feet, and followed her for three years. I expect he wished he'd kept his tools to throw at her head when the time came for him to go. And Rommel, an Austrian millionaire. Her affair with him was a series of violent recitatifs. They used to stand at opposite ends of the room and declaim abuse at each other. But there was only one man who played the part of a love motif, drifting from the first act to the last. And in the same way that one waits in an opera, for that motif to steal across the footlights, so I am waiting now, wondering if he will come back into Irela's life. . . ."

But Kober would never tell her who he was.

Pauline now began to scrutinise Irela's entourage much more closely than she had ever done before. Now that the season was more advanced, there were great comings and goings in the hotel, and the salon seemed filled with a tinkling of bells—the telephone bell that announced the arrival of a caller downstairs, the tiny silver peal of Irela's bell as she rang for Tremlowe to be in readiness, the brazen bark of the bell on the door leading to the vestibule. Most of these callers were greeted by Irela with such demonstrations of affection that the onlooker would have been excused for imagining that they all played, or were about to play, a part of passionate importance in her life. And yet. . . .

MAY was well advanced, and still Pauline watched and waited. More than ever was she certain that something was being kept from her. Irela now took far more pains with her appearance than she had done even during the height of the opera season. Her hair was dyed a deeper black, and was always carefully waved. The untidy strands that formerly strayed over her ears now were sternly repressed. Now, too, the manicurist called three times a week instead of only once, and stayed for twice as long. Twice a week, again, Irela went to the osteopath—a fashionable American who cracked the ribs of Europe's elite in a superb office overlooking the Rue de Rivoli. Pauline would wait for her in a salon decorated in the style of art moderne, with walls on which triangular unicorns vomited pink sea-shells into slate-grey urns. When she said defiantly, "There's nothing like it—nothing. He says I've got the bones of a girl of twenty!" "Yes," thought Pauline disloyally, "the bones of a girl of twenty after she has played a particularly damaging hockey match." For after each of her treatments Irela had a stiff neck, and suffered painful twinges in the small of her back, which caused her to see Dingley's neck as a flaming danger signal.

Dresses arrived at the hotel daily. Irela did not often take Pauline to the dressmakers' with her. She felt, naturally enough, that if she ordered thirty thousand francs' worth of clothes in a morning she could hardly avoid giving Pauline something for herself. It was much better that Pauline should be left at home, and in the kindness of her heart she said to herself, "Such a bore for the poor girl, sitting round and seeing me trying on dresses." Besides, the dressmakers were all so tactless—they would admire Pauline and remark in loud asides upon the beauty of her figure. Which would put ideas into her head. Sometimes, when she had been specially tempted, and had bought something particularly lovely—like that model with the chinchilla-trimmed sleeves—she would have a pang of conscience, and would tell them to throw in a simple little linen frock for Pauline—three thousand francs for that? "Ridiculous! If you're charging me thirty thousand for my model, you can let me have it for two, or I won't take either of them."

BUT one day there came an even more signal proof that something was in the wind. Pauline was sitting in the little dining-room waiting for Irela to come to lunch. Suddenly the door swung open and Irela stood before her with outstretched arms.

"Well," she cried, "do you like me?"

Pauline, taken by surprise, could not imagine what she meant. She supposed she must be referring to her frock. And so, although she had seen it before, on several occasions, she said, "I think it's lovely."

Irela made a gesture of impatience. "Not the frock. Me!"

Pauline stared at her. She was standing in the shadow and she could not see very clearly. What on earth was she expected to say? In this light Irela looked exactly the same. And yet, did she look exactly the same? Surely, there was something a little odd? At all costs, she felt, she must approve of whatever had been done, but she had first to be certain as to what had been done. She therefore assumed a delighted expression, and said, "My dear!"

Irela beamed. But she was still hungry for more explicit praise. "Well?"

"Do let me see you in a better light!"

"That's just what I want you to do." Obediently Irela trotted forward into the sunlight. Then Pauline saw what had happened.

Irela had been made up! For the first time in her life. She who, apart from the stage, had never put anything on her face except soap and water, only occasionally allowing herself a little dab of powder in hot weather, or when the grease-paint was obstinate—she who had made a fetish of her untarnished skin was made up elaborately. Her face and neck were heavily powdered and creamed. Her lips glistened like cerises glacees. There was rouge on her cheek-bones. Most astonishing of all, her eyebrows had been plucked. She looked . . . oh, how did she look? wondered Pauline. Younger or older? More striking or less striking? It was very difficult to say. On the whole Pauline decided that she looked younger, but a great deal of the character seemed to have gone out of her face.

"Well?" repeated Irela, a little impatiently.

"It's marvellous," breathed Pauline at last.

"Is it? Ha, ha! He, he! Is it?" She clapped her hands.

"You look years younger."

"Do I? Do I? Oh, darling!" She trotted out of the sunlight to the mirror, and stood there, preening herself. "I wanted it to be a surprise," she said, as she turned this way and that.

"For me?" Pauline wondered if she would notice the hint.

"Of course, darling." Irela turned and winked at her. "And for someone else. I'll tell you—very soon!"

A few days later Irela set Pauline's doubts at rest. She bustled into the room with another telegram. She was so excited that she had a fit of coughing that bent her double. When she was better she gasped, "He's coming . . . he's coming on 27th May! His ship docks at Marseilles on the 26th and he'll be here the following night. Two weeks, Pauline, only two weeks more!"

The mysterious stranger was, therefore, someone whom Pauline had not yet met. So Pauline reflected.

And then she remembered that 27th May was also the day on which Donald arrived.

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CHAPTER 4.

THESE days of happy expectancy should have been perfect. Irela appeared to be in better health than she had ever been before, and this was a double source of gratification to Pauline, for it meant that there was no danger from this source of any interruption of her own plans with Donald. However, Irela's increasing vitality was not entirely without its drawbacks. She felt more than ever, the encumbrance of Nurse Phillips. And it was very soon evident that the nurse's days were numbered.

The crisis arrived one day after Pauline had been a walk by herself in the Bois. Very delicate and lovely had been the tender leafage overhead, a green so sweet and innocent that it bore something of the pathos of childhood, so soon to pass. Through the pale passages of liquid green she had wandered, while the shadows played about her, and the lake, ever glimmering in the distance, was a tapestry of silver cloth on which quaint designs in blue and scarlet were being traced by the parasols of ladies in canoes. Yes . . . . there was a delicacy, a fastidiousness in these leafy ways that caused her to walk proudly, to hold her head high, and to imagine brave pageants in which she and Donald were lovers . . . pageants where he rescued her, with a silver lance, from the forces of evil, or where she knelt over him in exquisite compassion and stayed the crimson blood that stained his white forehead.

From this walk she returned to an episode so sordid that, had she not possessed an exceptional sense of loyalty, and an unusual clarity of vision, which enabled her to see the motive behind all Irela's actions, she would have packed her trunks and fled that night.

When she reached the apartment the first thing she saw was a newspaper, lying on the floor in the crumpled condition which always showed that Irela had been reading it. She picked it up. On the front page, marked with a blue pencil, was a story headed:

"City Honors Greatest Prima Donna."

"Baba Letoile at the Guildhall."

And then, underneath, there was the usual sort of story about Baba, who had apparently been entertained by the Lord Mayor, or some such nonsense. None of this news would have been particularly disturbing had it not been for the pencilled note at the bottom of the page. It was in Arthur Kober's handwriting and it read, "I am sure you will be delighted to hear of the prowess of your protegee. A.K."

Pauline let the paper fall to the floor. This was bad news. It implied a gloomy dinner, at which all her powers of persuasion and of optimism would be needed. She wondered where Irela was. Lying down, she supposed. Recovering from the shock. She decided to leave her to herself until the worst tantrums had worn off.

She went to her own room. As her hand was on the door she paused. Strange sounds came from inside. What could it be? She opened the door, her heart beating quickly.

Nurse Phillips was lying on her bed, sobbing . . . deep, terrible sobs that seemed to rack her whole body.

"What is it?" cried Pauline, running forward. "What is the matter?"

Nurse Phillips, still sobbing, lifted her head and looked at Pauline. Although she was sincerely moved by the sight of her unwonted grief Pauline could not help thinking, "How ridiculous she looks! How pathetically ridiculous!" The eyes were red and swollen, the face puffy and white. Then she blamed herself for thinking such things. She sat down on the bed and put her arm round Nurse Phillips' shoulders.

Gently she said, "Won't you tell me what is the matter?"

"I have to go . . . back to Canada," sobbed Nurse Phillips.

Pauline breathed a sigh of relief. If that was all, surely there was no great need for all this lamentation. Nurse Phillips had been longing to go for weeks. Why was she so upset about it? She put her thoughts into words:

"I thought you wanted to go?"

NURSE PHILLIPS sat up, gulped, and tried to dry her eyes. But the tears still streamed down her cheeks as she said, "Yes. But not in a one-class boat."

Pauline looked at her, puzzled. "I don't understand."

Nurse Phillips, with many gulps and shivers, explained: "Madame Irela says I'm poisoning her. Well . . . that we needn't argue about. She's an hysterical case, and she'll soon be a mental one." Indignation was gradually restoring her self-control. "I'm quite prepared to answer, in a court of law, for my efficiency. I've nursed Royalty, I've nursed Prime Ministers, I've . . ."

"Yes," interrupted Pauline quietly, "I know you're absolutely capable. I've always known that. But what was it you were saying about a one-class boat?"

Nurse Phillips stared at her with a sullen expression. "She says that she won't pay for me to go back first class."

"What?" Pauline, with all her loyalty to Irela, could not help looking disagreeably surprised.

"She swears that she won't pay for it. It's monstrous." Nurse Phillips, by now, was crying no more. Her eyes were hot, dry, angry. "It's a recognised thing, in the medical profession, that nurses travel first. Nobody's ever questioned it. The poorest families, if they engage a nurse, provide for that. A nurse is a lady, Miss Joycey. She isn't a housemaid."

Pauline tried desperately to think of something to say, without success.

"It's the most outrageous thing Madame Irela has done since I've been with her," continued Nurse Phillips, with rising wrath. "She tells me I can go back on a one-class boat, which means a third-class boat. She, with all her money, tells me that she can't afford more than fifteen pounds, which is the fare she proposes to pay. The first-class fare, on the slow boats, is only twenty-eight. But Madame Irela, who spends a thousand pounds on a bracelet she sees in a shop window, and grows tired of it after she's worn it once, can't afford the difference between fifteen pounds and twenty-eight pounds in order to send me back as I should be sent!"

Pauline took Nurse Phillips' hand, and patted it nervously. At all costs she must stop this outburst.

She said:

"Please, please, don't be so upset. I'll speak to Madame Irela. I'm sure she doesn't mean what she says. She's overwrought just now. She's had bad news. She doesn't mean . . ."

"Doesn't mean?" Nurse Phillips snatched away her hand. Her voice rose almost to a scream. She faced Pauline, trembling violently. "Will you never understand?" she cried.

"Understand?"

"Do you know what Irela said when I told her that I would not go back, unless I travelled first-class?"

"No?"

"She said that if I didn't"—and here Nurse Phillips leant forward, to give extra point to her appalling remark—"'Jesus Christ walked on the waters and so can you!'"

And then Pauline laughed . . . hopelessly, hysterically. She flung herself on

Madame Irela (Evelyn Laye) visits her former sweetheart (Emlyn Williams), in the asylum, and is grief-stricken to find he does not recognise her. Another scene from the Gaumont-British film version of "Evensong."

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the bed, sobbing this fearful laugher against the incongruous obscenity of life.

And it was thus that Irela discovered them—appearing like an angry goddess in the doorway—shimmering in a violet creation of Worth, with a spray of diamonds in her hair.

But all her abuse of Pauline, during the next few days, all her accusations of conspiracy, and "stabbing in the back" fell on deaf ears. For Pauline, by now, was numbed in spirit. And she looked with dull, uninterested eyes on the little Scotswoman who took Nurse Phillips' place, after that much-abused woman had sailed from Cherbourg, in a first-class single cabin on the Ile de Paris.

CHAPTER 5.

DONALD and his sister were coming by the train which arrived at the Gare du Nord at midnight. Irela's friend was coming by the train which arrived at seven. And Pauline wished that it were the other way about.

Not that she was any longer assailed by doubts. Her mind was made up. Come what may she would be meeting Donald half an hour after midnight at the Gare de Lyon, and nothing would keep her from boarding the train and speeding south with him.

Yet she felt anxious. Things had gone wrong so often before . . . was it possible that they could go right at last? Then she reflected that the reason they had so often gone wrong was that she herself had been weak . . . had failed him. Well, she was weak no longer. Irela could beg, command, fall down in a fit, be run over by a taxi, be trapped in a burning building . . . it would not affect her plans. Besides, why should she worry when Irela was keyed up with expectancy for her own lover?

All the same, she was anxious. There was thunder in the air, literally as well as metaphorically. As she loked out of the window she could see the clouds were black over the Bois, and shot with faint lightnings.

"I 'ates lightning."

Pauline started and looked round. It was Tremlowe, who had crept into her bedroom softly.

"You startled me."

"Sorry, miss." Tremlowe sniffed. "I came in here to get out of the way of 'er ladyship. She's in an awful mood."

Pauline frowned. "You musn't say that, Tremlowe."

Tremlowe sniffed again and ignored the reproof.

"Why do you hate lightning, Tremlowe?"

Tremlowe's eyes lit up. It was the first time for some weeks that anybody had asked her a question about herself. And unless people ask one questions about oneself . . . well, there is a feeling that the world is a hard, unsympathetic place. So she replied with alacrity, "I 'ates lightning because when I was a little girl my mother took me for a walk in a thunderstorm. And when the storm was at its 'ight, she told me a story about a man who'd been struck and had 'is leg twisted round his neck."

"Oh . . . but that's horrible!"

"'Orrible indeed, miss." Yet there was a certain relish in the way she said it. "Right round 'is neck, she said, the leg was twisted. In an instant. And of course they could never twist it back again." She shook her head grimly. "That's what I'm always afraid of when it comes on to thunder and lightning . . . 'aving my leg twisted round my neck." And she added, with complete gravity, "What 'er ladyship would say if that happened . . . well, one doesn't like to think of it, does one?"

Pauline tried not to smile.

"Isn't her ladyship . . . feeling up to the mark?" She asked the question almost involuntarily. She had not meant to discuss Irela at all. It was neither good policy nor good manners. Still, the question was asked and it started a stream of Tremlowe's confessions.

"Oh, it's my nerves, miss . . . that's what makes it so difficult . . . I wouldn't mind being sworn at nor told that I'm not 'alf there, nor 'aving it said that I'm a liar . . . though I must say I wouldn't stand that from anybody but a great artist like 'er ladyship . . ."

"You should have some aspirin," said Pauline.

"It goes to my 'eart. Besides, aspirin wouldn't cure my trouble. Because my trouble isn't anything to do with me . . . It's to do with 'er ladyship."

"How?"

"'E's coming to-night, isn't he?"

"That's no concern of ours." Pauline spoke sharply.

"What's going to 'appen?" She took a step towards Pauline.

"What do you mean?" Pauline felt a tremor of fear . . . so strange did this little red-faced woman look, silhouetted against the window, with the dark clouds behind her, and the trees twitching faintly in the distant lightning's reflection.

"It's ten years since they've met," whispered Tremlowe again.

"Ten years!" She held up a finger, and opened her mouth wide, as though listening to a footfall in the passage. But there was only the low rumble of the thunder. She kept her eyes on Pauline.

"Ten years," she repeated, still in the same soft, trembling voice. "And they're old now. When they were together last it was in Paris too, but then 'er ladyship was only middle-aged. 'Er voice . . . oh it was wonderful then, miss, like an autumn day . . . and it wasn't only 'er voice . . . she could still . . ." She chuckled, rather horribly. "But I mustn't talk like this." She turned sharply and looked towards the door. But there was nobody.

"You certainly must not, Tremlowe." Pauline's voice, however, lacked conviction. She did not wish to listen to secrets to which she had no right. But suddenly she was seized by a violent curiosity to learn the identity of this mysterious stranger. Tremlowe could tell her. She turned to Tremlowe, and asked, "Who is he?"

And Tremlowe said, "The Duc de Vallorbes."

"WHO?"

Tremlowe repeated it.

Pauline searched her brain. But she could not fix the identity. Then Tremlowe said:—

"'E's one of the greatest gentlemen of France. A semi-royal. If there 'adn't been the French Revolution 'e'd 'ave been a royality. But even now, there's something royal about 'im, and something extraordinary too, for 'e doesn't live like ordinary men. 'E's been an exile, they've 'ad laws passed against 'im . . . 'e's wild. 'E disappeared for five years after the war, and in those five years nobody knew where 'e was, except 'er ladyship. 'E's been in Africa now . . . not just big-game 'unting, like most gentlemen, but something funny as well, mixed up with religion. 'Er ladyship's told me little bits now and again, when she's in the mood."

"Were they . . ." Pauline paused, wondering how she should phrase the question. "Were they . . . very fond of one another?"

Tremlowe put her hands on her hips, threw back her head, and emitted a low cuckle. "Fond? Fond? It was the greatest love affair I ever 'eard of." Then she became suddenly serious, and shook her head.

"But it was always difficult, in a way, for 'er ladyship, I mean. You see, 'e was thirty when they met. She was thirty-eight. Which makes 'im forty-two to her fifty when they separated, ten years ago. For twelve years they were together, on and off. . . . But why should I be telling you this, when you know it already . . ."

"I didn't know it . . ." She waved Tremlowe away. "I don't want to know it."

"Why, it was the talk of Europe." Tremlowe folded her arms. The thunder growled again. "Not only of England, or France, or Hitaly . . ." she said contemptuously, "but of Europe. 'E was related to the King of Italy, and the King protested. 'E followed 'er to Russia when she sang at Moscow, and they sent couriers to fetch him 'ome. She led 'im on . . . of course . . . although she always pretended that it wasn't her fault. Not 'er fault!" She shook with silent laughter.

Pauline roused herself. This was scandalous . . . this listening to the gossip of an old maid. She said, "Tremlowe, you mustn't say any more. That's enough. You can go."

But Tremlowe did not move. "I'll go in a minute, miss. I like you. We all like you. You're a lady, if ever there was one. You never say an unkind word to nobody, and yet you know 'ow to keep your place. Oh, I've noticed things, miss, and I've 'eard things, and I'm grateful to you. And that's why I'm telling you this now."

She leaned forward and raised a crooked finger. As she did so a sudden torrent of rain assaulted the shimmering panes behind her. Rat . . . tat . . . tat beat the rain, like a ghostly, petulant tattoo. And the leaves of the chestnut trees fluttered wildly, their late blossoms flying.

"Stick to your young man, miss, whatever happens! Stick to your young man!"

"Thank you, Tremlowe . . . thank you. And now you must really . . ."

Tremlowe interrupted her. "Whatever 'er ladyship says or does. Don't you pay no heed to it. 'Er ladyship's not normal, and in a few hours she may be less normal still."

"Tremlowe!"

"There may be an awful shock in store for 'er ladyship." Tremlowe licked her lips, and her eyes narrowed. "An awful shock!" she whispered again. "She's never faced the fact that she's an old woman, yet. Only last night, when I fastened the diamonds round 'er neck, she looked at me in the glass . . . she always talks to me in the glass . . . never turns 'er 'ead round . . . and she said, 'I'm still a young woman, Tremlowe.' She . . . 'er ladyship still a young woman! If you could see what I've seen . . ." She laughed, a strange croaking laughter.

It was then that Pauline, in shame and anger, cried, "Stop . . . stop! Tremlowe, I forbid you to . . ."

But her words were lost in a tremendous crash of thunder that split the roofs of Paris like a mailed fist. The wind and the storm leapt upon them. She rushed to close the windows. When she turned round again Tremlowe had fled.

THE storm was over quickly. It left a Paris that shone and sparkled beneath a burnished sky, a Paris that smelt of warm, wet leaves and a southern breeze.

Pauline lunched with Irela in the Bois. They had a table in the open air, beneath a big orange-striped parasol. Irela was dressed in a white coat trimmed with fur. Through the greater part of the meal, she was thoughtful and silent. Only when they came to the stage of fraises du bois, with their beautiful accompaniment of thick yellow cream, did she lean forward and say, "I've been thinking over your future, darling."

"My future?" Pauline blushed. She wondered if Irela was going to refer to Donald.

"Or perhaps I should say our future.

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"We get on so well together . . . give me just a tiny drop more Cointreau, no, not so much or I shall be toxyboo . . . here, you take a sip, darling. Really! You're taking it all . . . give me the bottle . . . There! Where was I?"

"We got on so well together, you were saying?"

"Oh, yes! And I was thinking that there was really no reason why we shouldn't always get on well together."

She looked at Pauline quickly. But she learnt nothing. For Pauline's lids were lowered.

Always! The word rang through Pauline's head. It had about it a strange dead quality. Why was that? Above her were the singing branches, behind her the laughing water. The air echoed with the bright kaleidoscopic symphony of knives, forks, clanging plates, clatter, distant music . . . and all these happy sounds were shot through with the metallic splinters of bird song. Her limbs felt light and free . . . it was an hour when one should dance. Yet her heart was heavy . . . and the word "Always" weighed upon it like a pall.

"But of course." She cursed herself as soon as she had said those words. Was there, in her, some other being, some curious hypnotised self, who forced her to do Irela's bidding? Was there some slave, chained deep in her soul, whose dictates, by some strange psychological paradox, she was being forced to obey?

Irela sipped her Cointreau contentedly.

"And so," she continued, "I've been thinking that really you ought to have a little money of your own."

PAULINE stirred uneasily in her seat. She always felt embarrassed when people talked about money.

"No . . . don't thank me, darling, not yet. Just listen to what I have to say. I think the best thing to do—much the best thing to do—would be to take out a life insurance."

"Yes?"

"I don't mean, of course, just the ordinary insurance which is paid when you die—don't let's think of horrid things like that—but something you get after a period of years. Say fifteen years . . ."

"Fifteen years!" Pauline could not help the dismay from ringing in her voice.

"Well really, darling, don't talk as if it were a lifetime. Fifteen years is nothing . . . absolutely nothing!"

"No . . . of course not."

"And you don't want to be independent any sooner than that. Do you?"

Pauline did not reply. Irela took her silence for assent. She continued:

"You see . . . it's really very interesting, if one thinks about it . . . you're only twenty-one now . . . an absolute infant." She sighed, and then smiled again. "But still, one isn't young always. And if, every year, I pay £400—as a matter of fact, it isn't quite as much as that, it's £369/12/4—you'll be entitled when you're thirty-five to about £7000."

"Seven thousand pounds!" echoed Pauline. But that was not really what she would have said, had she spoken without forethought. She would have said, in a very different tone of voice, "Thirty-five!" There was a terrible sound about that number. It had a sterile ring. It seemed a sort of No Man's Land of age. Thirty-five! What was the use of seven thousand pounds, or seventy thousand pounds, when one was thirty-five? Then, she suddenly realised the absurd nature of these fleeting impressions. Why—one would never be thirty-five! (And indeed, when one is twenty-one, the idea of ever being thirty-five is too fantastic to be considered.) So she added hastily, "Why, it's a fortune!"

"It certainly is." Irela was gratified that Pauline was being so suitably impressed by the figures with which she was feeding her. "It certainly is," she repeated. "Seven thousand pounds at five per cent. is three hundred and fifty pounds a year. But there's no reason why you should be content with five per cent. If you liked to buy an annuity, you could get eight. Which would be over five hundred a year, for life. Of course, they take your capital when you die, but as you haven't any dependents . . ."

Pauline looked up suddenly. What was it that made her start like that? A tone in Irela's voice? A queer suspicion . . . but of what?

It was as though somebody had whispered in her ear, "Take care!" And as she looked into Irela's eyes, which were slightly narrowed in the sunlight, she seemed to see in them an expression of cunning. Cunning! The word had only to enter her head to be dismissed. She was being morbid, ungenerous. And as she stared Irela blinked, and the illusion vanished.

"It's terribly generous of you," she murmured.

There for the moment Irela let the matter rest. She was very well satisfied with Pauline's attitude. And she was particularly pleased that she had managed to sow these suggestive hints just before Pauline went away on this holiday with her young man. One never knew quite what young people might do, on the Riviera. But Pauline was a sensible girl, and now that she knew how happily everything was being arranged for her, she would be very unlikely to get too deeply involved with any scatter-brained young American.

"Well—that's that!" She leant back in her chair, and smacked her lips. Really, life was still very much worth the living. Her digestion was functioning perfectly. The lobster had, as yet, shown no signs of proclaiming its independence, and she did not see why it should. The fraises du bois had been delicious, and the Cointreau was exactly the right thing to finish it all off . . . she gazed vaguely at the label on the bottle, which recounted the interesting fact that Cointreau was made from orange leaves and rested with miraculous lightness on even the most delicate stomachs. Well, she had not a delicate stomach, thank God! Though, of course, she told herself, she had a different stomach . . . un estomac distingue . . . that went without saying . . . but not a damned, silly, delicate stomach.

AND apart from the lunch, Maurice was due to arrive tonight! She hoisted her chin quickly at the thought, and for the hundredth time she wondered if she had been a fool not to have her face lifted. Then, she was quickly comforted by the reflection that he would be older too, and, she hoped, that he would not have worn so well as she had. Yet did she hope this? When she remembered how he had looked that night at Roquebrune, silhouetted against the dying, violet-wreathed sun . . .

She passed her tongue quickly over her upper lip. Yes, it was still great fun. Everything was great fun. And Pauline . . . how sweet she was! Pauline, going off on her little jaunt! But why not? For the hundredth time she assured herself there was no real danger. She was cold physically—Irela was sure of that—Pauline was not like herself, in whose old veins the mad elixir still pulsed fitfully. But that was not what she had really meant when the word "danger" had entered her head. She had meant that there was no real danger of Pauline deserting her. She had played her cards too well for that.

IT was six o'clock, and again the clouds were piling over Paris. Pauline, standing at her window, waiting, waiting, wondered if this day would never end, wondered, too, what strange freak the weather would play before it was over.

For the last two hours it had grown wintry again. Nor was this her imagination only. The temperature had fallen perceptibly, and it was already dark enough to light up.

She stood there in the twilight. The apartment was very still. A few minutes before Irela had hustled through, telling her that she was going to put on her hat and coat and that she would be shortly coming in to say good-bye.

Good-bye. It seemed incredible that she would soon be free, even for the few golden days that Irela had allowed her. They were going to be marvellous days, she knew that, days that would decide the whole tenor of her life. And they were on the point of beginning.

Then she heard the discreet buzz of the bell on the little front door. She started violently. Who would be calling at this hour? Then she remembered that it was probably Dingley, calling her to say that the car was ready to take Irela to the station. But no . . . Dingley never came up. He always telephoned from the hall. Who could it be? Then she frowned, and told herself not to be absurdly suspicious. It might be any one of athousand people . . . a messenger calling with a note, a page boy, a waiter . . . Anyway, Tremlowe was here, and she would attend to it.

Yet, her ears were strained to catch the sound which echoed through. And they were strange sounds . . . a man's voice arguing, in broken English. She could not hear what he said. Nor could she hear Tremlowe's reply, though she fancied that her voice sounded alarmed and agitated. She laced her fingers tightly together. It was ridiculous . . . this apprehension. Then she heard the door slam. Soft footsteps hurried across the hall. There was the sound of a tap on Irela's door. More voices. Another door closed. Silence.

It was at this moment that Pauline on a wild impulse decided to fly. What was she waiting for? Nothing! Irela, it is true, had told her that she would be back in a few moments to say "good-bye," but why should she wait for that? It was not as though they had anything to say to one another. Pauline's suitcase was packed. Her coat lay across it, by her side. Her ticket was in her bag. There was absolutely no reason why she should wait. She was going to dine alone at a cafe. Irela had arranged that, for she had told her that she and Maurice might be coming back here after they had dined themselves, and that she wanted the apartment to herself. Why then should she not go, at once, before anything happened?

"Yes," she said to herself, "I will creep out now . . . while there is time . . ." She turned round. As she did so, she stifled a scream. In the doorway stood Tremlowe. But a different Tremlowe. She swayed there, wisps of grey, lustreless hair hanging over her forehead, and her face was lit by a hideous grin. She kept jerking her thumb over her shoulder, and as Pauline stepped forward a sweet, sickly scent of gin assailed her.

"Tremlowe . . . what do you want?"

"'Er ladyship!" she hiccoughed. "She wants you." She tottered, steadied herself, regarded Pauline with an owlish smile.

Pauline stayed quite still. Her eyes took in the whole fantastic scene . . . the shadowed room, her suitcase by the wall with its gleaming handles, the rich rose-pink of the couch by the bed, and the smudgy figure of Tremlowe swaying in the doorway. She

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had only to take up the suitcase, to pass that horrible figure, and she was free. But she could not. She could only stand, while her lips said, "Why?"

"Wants you." Again, the owlish smile. "Very important."

With a final effort to control herself, Pauline closed her eyes. In a few seconds she had reasoned herself into a condition that she believed was normal. She said, "It is nothing. It can be nothing. I will go to her. It is the least I can do."

Not looking at Tremlowe, she passed through the door. Behind her echoed Tremlowe's voice. "Don't forget, miss . . . don't forget what I . . . what I . . ."

An ugly sound half-way between a cough and a giggle was all she heard.

CHAPTER 6

"COME here . . . come here."

Pauline, for a moment, seemed unable to move. The figure that crouched, hump-backed, in the chair, looked doomed and horrible. Had it not been for the voice she would not have realised that it was Irela. Yet even the voice was thin and croaking—a tortured parody of Irela's voice—like a very old little boy, crying in the dark.

Then she stepped forward quickly. A white wrinkled hand came up and clutched here.

"What is it . . . what is it?"

"He's here! In Paris!" The shoulders hunched themselves together, shook.

"Here . . . already?"

Pauline smoothed her hand mechanically. What did this mean?

"They haven't told me. The keeper's just been."

"The keeper?"

"He's mad!"

"Mad?"

"Mad!"

In a grotesque chorus the word repeated itself. The shadowed, twilit room seemed to echo with it. Mad . . . mad . . . mad! An insane desire to laugh seized Pauline. She wanted to throw her hands above her head, so that her arms would cast wild black shadows against the ceiling, and cry, "Mad, mad!" till the poison in her was spent, till she herself was sane with exhaustion.

She stood there, helpless. There seemed nothing that she could do. And now, as if to heighten the melodrama of this fantastic scene, the clouds began to pile themselves deeper and darker outside the window, and the thunder muttered once more in the distance. Through it came the dry voice of Irela, speaking as though she were suffocating from an intolerable grief:

"He came here soon after six. . . . I had put on my hat and the car was waiting . . . he is called Domenic . . . he has been with Maurice since he arrived. They suspected it for a long time . . . for months . . . he was lonely out there, in the heat, with no one, he was always highly strung . . . oh, if I had known, if I had known!"

In the dusk her hand beat a feeble, fluttering tattoo on her knee, the diamonds winked and sparkled, even in this light.

Pauline lifted her head. She was making a tremendous fight for self-control. She clutched at every mental straw that floated through her bewildered consciousness. In this quiet room, whose only sound was the slow beating of Irela's hand in a strange rhythm, she closed her eyes, and said to herself, "I'm all right. I'm sane. I'm free. I am sorry for Irela, but she must fight her own battles. In five hours I shall be with Donald." Five hours. What might not happen in five hours?

Then the telephone rang.

THE telephone continued to ring.

Neither of them seemed able to go to it. Irela's hand ceased to move. Pauline stared into the dark corner whence the sound came. Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle . . . and then the slow mutter of the thunder . . . tinkle, tinkle, tinkle . . . what was it that paralysed them? Why did they both feel that some terror lurked at the other end of the wire?

"Go to it."

Pauline stepped forward. The bell rang again. She glanced back at Irela. Then she went to the telephone and lifted the receiver.

There was a high, blurred hum, like the noise that echoes in one's head when one is taking an anaesthetic. Through the hum drifted a voice that said many times "Chateau Delacroix."

She repeated it to Irela.

Irela rose to her feet. Her green dress sparkled in the shadows. "Yes, yes . . . that is where they have taken him."

Pauline listened again. "De la part du Duc de Vallorbes . . . c'est le Docteur Stalyx qui parle. . . ."

"The doctor . . . he wants to speak to you."

Irela came forward. Her face was very white. Pauline remembered inconsequently, as she handed her the instrument, that she had never seen Irela's face white before.

"Yes, yes, it is Madame Irela. Yes. . . ."

Pauline, clutching her hands, stared out of the window.

Irela was speaking again. "Yes. I understand." Her voice was husky. "It mayn't last. Perhaps only an hour. I will come."

She put down the receiver. Pauline clutched her hands more tightly. Her eyes seemed fixed for ever on the branches that swayed so delicately outside. "Green branches . . . lucky branches . . . so close to one another," she murmured. "Able to lie, so long, limb to limb, with the pale leaves singing around you, so that you may sigh your secrets fearlessly, through the long night." And as she sat there, the green branches became dark and grey in the mist of her tears, and from an immense distance she heard Irela saying, "Yes?"

"He's sane . . . just for a little while . . . a lucid interval. . . ."

Pauline bit her lip. She was shaken by a fierce, intolerable laughter. It was a grim laughter that tore her spirit, a cruel laughter that was like the flash of lightning that streaked its thin white against the curdled sky outside. She closed her eyes . . . "lucid interval," she whispered to herself, "a lunatic . . . wants Irela . . . he's having a lucid interval . . . wants Irela . . . wants me . . . I expect he's got straws in his hair . . . it's all too funny."

But it was not funny. Nor was it false. It was happening, here and now, in this room. She was a real person. Irela was a real person. And here they were, facing one another, in a room in Paris, with a thunderstorm threatening outside, and a lunatic's keeper on the other end of the telephone. These were facts. They had to be faced. She took a deep breath. Her voice was calm and grave as she answered, "You want to go to him now?"

"I must." Irela wrung her hands. "It may be my only chance."

"And would you like me to go with you?"

"Oh, my dear . . . if you please." There was no command in Irela's voice. There was only a humble, desperate supplication.

"Very well," said Pauline. "The car is still at the door. We had better go at once."

She glanced at the clock. It was a quarter-past seven.

The Chateau Delacroix lies about ten miles outside Paris, to the north-east of Versailles. It has no connection with the various branches of the Delacroix family whose names are graven on the scroll of France's history. It was, for many generations, the seat of a family even more illustrious, but fifty years ago it fell into decay, until it was taken by a German Jew who had made a fortune out of the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war. Some fatality seemed to hang over it, however, for the German Jew committed suicide a few years after he took possession. Since then, the Chateau Delacroix passed through many hands. It was finally bought, in 1920, by a medical syndicate whose board of directors included a Viennese psycho-analyst, a rich young English cotton merchant, the widower of a Parisian cocotte, and a Presbyterian American business man, who did all the work, and pocketed most of the profits.

Through the green valleys under the blue-black sky, Irela's car sped, chic, swift, gleaming. They sat in it, the two women, silent. Within half an hour they drew up at the tall iron gates.

A porter came to the door, peered through a grille, and shuffled across the gravel to admit them. As the gates swung open, a bell clanged, echoing dolorously through the courtyard. They swept through, ran down a curving drive, and stopped in front of a gaunt porch that seemed like the entrance to a cave.

Pauline had just time, before they entered, to look around her. The building was grey and rambling, and though it was in a good state of preservation there was a dead look about it. The stone was lifeless, and the iron bars which guarded many of the windows robbed the glass of its lustre . . . the windows were only blind eyes. Vast cedar trees stretched their branches towards the roof, sometimes touching the slates.

As the footman opened the door, a shrill scream echoed from a distant part of the building. Irela drew back, and clutched Pauline's arm. For a moment she stayed still. The scream came again, and then a laugh . . . like a parrot's laugh. There was silence. Irela dropped her hands to her side. They entered.

Before she went upstairs, she turned to Pauline. Her face was drawn, old, and pitifully white beneath the clumsy patches of rouge. She said:

"I do not know how long I shall be." She looked away from Pauline. Then, with a ghastly attempt at brightness, "I wouldn't stay in here if I were you. It may be catching." The laugh she tried to force turned into a sob. She muttered something about going for a walk in the garden. Then she walked up the stairs, and Pauline was left alone in the waiting-room.

SHE walked to the window and looked out. Nervously she beat on the cold glass with the points of her nails. Listening abstractedly to the tinkling sound she forgot that it was she herself who caused it, and stared back with the sudden frightened fancy that somebody was tapping on the glass from outside, beating with crazed, purposeless fingers. The silence and the sight of the blank grey pane brought her back to reality. She clenched her hands tightly and tried to smile. It was absurd to work oneself up like this.

The windows opened down to the ground, and she decided to go out. The fresh air would do her good. There could surely be no danger? The chateau was evidently a perfectly-conducted asylum. They would never allow people to wander about who were likely to be dangerous. As she stepped through the window, and looked around the deserted terraces, it seemed that nobody else was about at all. She had the grounds to herself.

She watched those upper windows. In some the blinds were already drawn and now and then she would see figures pass in silhouette. Who were they, those figures?

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Mad or sane? Ah—what did it matter? Behind the blinds, all were alike. Draw down a little strip of canvas and all differences were blotted out. Draw over a shroud of linen, and all distinctions were banished, in death. She bit her lip. There she was again . . . she must stop her mind from wandering.

At this precise moment she was opposite the extreme left wing, looking up at the suite where, though she knew it not, the Duc de Vallorbes was housed. Looking up, this delicate, ivory creature, with eyes bright from fear, and lips parted so that the cold air which she had breathed danced before her like white ghostly feathers. Looking up, waiting. And it was then that through the open window there came a low, rippling chain of melody.

She stood transfixed. Somebody was playing the opening bars of Massanet's "Barcarolle." Yes, that was it. How often had she heard that smooth and melancholy accompaniment, like a stream in winter flood! It was one of Irela's loveliest songs. Was she . . . would she . . .?

The question answered itself. From that high, grey window floated a voice, her voice, in infantile sweetness, of a purity so radiant that it tore the soul. And as the song drifted into the garden, there came, of a sudden, peace, with soft-folding wings. Peace, and a heavenly sanity. Through a gap in the clouds, as though the music had called forth the light, the sun shone dimly, lighting the roofs with a golden sheen, turning the lake from a dead, cold thing into living, sparkling water. Tears came to Pauline's eyes, and she hung her head in an access of exquisite sadness. She was conscious that everything was right again, that the trees were her friends once more, that the statues were just statues, lovely pieces of carven stone, not evil spirits—no, not any more.

"Dans ton coeur dort un clair de lune . ."

That was what she was singing to him. "In your heart a moonlight sleeps . . ." It was very wonderful of her to have thought of that song. It made his madness seem almost beautiful—like a sleep, a moonlit sleep. Perhaps that was what it really was—perhaps it was just a wandering through a cool world of shadowed crystal, a silver, passionless world of silence and shadows. Perhaps he had his "secret valleys where he might weep undisturbed," perhaps even the morning skies were dimmed and dusted with stars, so that his tired eyes might know no hurt. "In your heart a moonlight sleeps."

And then, it was as though the garden were rent by a flash of lightning. High and sharp an insane cackle split the air. The song stopped . . . the cackle continued . . . the horrible parrot laughter that they had heard when they entered. It seemed to fill the garden with its loathsome reverbrations . . . it went on and on . . . louder and louder . . . it was as though it were coming closer to her . . . now it was in her very ears.

She turned and ran back to the house.

As she entered the hall, breathless, she saw Irela coming quickly down the stairs. Her hands clutched the bannisters, her head was turned over her shoulder, looking behind her, as though some fearful vision were pursuing. She did not speak to Pauline. She passed her, and got straight into the waiting car. Pauline followed. In silence they drove back to Paris.

CHAPTER 7.

AND now it was dark. They had spoken no word.

As Pauline entered the little dining-room in the hotel, after walking feverishly up and down her own room, she saw a dim figure standing by the mantelpiece. It was Irela, who turned round sharply. Pauline was stricken by the appalling grief which proclaimed itself from her features.

Irela said, "I want to say nothing, Pauline. Nothing. Do you understand? He is dead to me, from now and for ever . . . dead. . . ."

Her whole body shivered, her hands stretched out before her as though seeking to clutch something. And then, she dropped her arms to her sides, and added in a toneless voice, "We had better dine."

"Yes."

"I will be with you in a minute."

She left the room. Pauline sat down at the table, and covered her eyes with her hands. A waiter appeared, deftly arranged a cloth, wheeled in a tray, with some hot dishes, which he covered with a napkin.

After a few moments, Irela came back. She handed Pauline her wrist-watch. "You left this in the bathroom," she said dryly. She sat down. In a harsh voice, she said to the waiter, "Serve us, if you please."

He served them. He served them with Bortsch, with Sale Colbert, with Noisette d'Agneau, with Bombes pralines. Irela ate heartily, though sometimes she put down her fork, even when her mouth was full, and stared in front of her, as though she saw some strange vision. And thus she remained, immobile, until the spell was broken, when her jaw suddenly worked again, the fork was lifted to the mouth, a gulp of champagne was swallowed.

In this manner they progressed to the stage of coffee.

"Benedictine? Brandy? Cointreau?"

"Cointreau, please."

Pauline sipped the Cointreau. It was smooth and fragrant. It had the tang of the south. She realised that she must quickly detach herself from this insane episode. She rose to her feet.

"Now I must go." Her voice sounded harsh, cruel. Yet, in desperation, she said it again, as though to reassure herself. "Now I must go."

"Not yet . . . not yet . . . please, Pauline, you've still another hour."

"Another hour? But it's a quarter to twelve! My train goes at half-past."

IRELA stifled a sob. "Look at the clock," she said.

Pauline looked. A quarter-past eleven. She stared and stared. Surely . . . it must be wrong? Time could not go so slowly? She turned to Irela. "I'm sorry," she said. "I can't think why I thought it was so late."

"You want to leave me . . . that's all it is . . . you want to leave me."

"Oh, my dear, it isn't that I want to leave you, it's just that I can't disappoint him."

"Do you love him so much?" Irela was not looking at her. She was looking at her fingers, which she twined nervously in her lap.

"Yes."

There was silence. Then, in a dry, strained voice, Irela said, "We've still an hour. We could play a game of dominoes."

The wild incongruity of the idea passed Pauline by. Whatever Irela had suggested, in this last mad hour, she would have done. She moved to the drawer where the dominoes were kept. As she did so, she stretched out her hand for the light.

"Don't turn on the light," cried Irela harshly. "We'll play by moonlight."

Pauline nodded dumbly. She moved the table to the window.

"And we'll play for . . ." Irela paused, as she shuffled the pieces.

"Five francs," said Pauline mechanically.

"No. We'll play for . . . love!" Irela lifted her head. And the moonlight shone full into her eyes, so that they seemed to be luminous in the dark.

THE moonlight shone, too, upon the dominoes. Their backs of mother-of-pearl glistened with an unearthly sheen. On the green velvet cloth they looked like pale fishes swimming in a pool that was deep and dark. Over them the hands of the two women glided—Pauline's hands with a fluttering, uncertain motion—Irela's hands like dry, white claws, with the brilliants winking suddenly upon the fingers.

They played in silence. It was difficult for Pauline to see the numbers. But Irela seemed to be gifted with second-sight. She scarcely glanced at the pallid emblems which she seized so avidly. Her eyes were always upon Pauline. And Pauline was always staring at the table.

Irela won the first game. Almost before the queer white pattern had time to stretch over the cloth, Pauline was left with the double-six and four other pieces.

Pauline thought she had won the second game. She finished first. Irela had one piece left. But when she turned it over, it was a double-blank. It stared at her in the moonlight like a blind white eye. That game was a draw.

The third game was longer. The pieces spread themselves into a complicated pattern. As they played, the only sound in the world seemed to be the faint clicking of the tiny glimmering squares. Irela won again.

And now, a strange and petulant feeling of irritation possessed Pauline. Why should Irela always win? Why should she always take everything? The game of dominoes suddenly assumed a grotesque importance in her eyes. Irela had said that they were playing for love. It was as though some strange symbolism echoed in those words. For love! Very well . . . they would play for love. And this time she would win!

She strained her eyes through the gloom. Irela was already shuffling the pieces.

"This must be the last game."

"Yes . . . yes . . . the last game."

She seized her seven pieces and stood them up on the dark cloth. The moonlight shone upon them, showing her a sinister array of black pips. There was the double-six . . . "mossy-face" of evil memory . . . staring at her, and the double-five, and the double-four. They were all dangerous, unless she could dispose of them properly. She glanced at Irela's hand. Seven white, gleaming pieces . . . so pretty, so innocent . . . why, their smooth surfaces, in this light of infinity, glowed with delicious colors of pink and ethereal mauve. Yet she distrusted them . . . they seemed to wink at her through the gloom.

She put down the double-six on the table. Instantly Irela joined it with a six-three, and scored fifteen. "Fifteen," muttered Pauline, and noted the score on the piece of paper by her side. Pauline joined the three-five, Irela put the six-five at the other end and scored another ten. Pauline added the double-five and scored fifteen. But most of this was wiped out immediately by Irela adding the five-blank and scoring yet another ten. It was as though the pieces were enchanted, as though some spell were at work which changed the little pips as soon as Irela touched them, causing them to weave themselves into mystical combinations of numbers. Almost before she realised it the game was over, with a heavy score in Irela's favour.

"You've won."

"Yes. I've won."

Pauline stared at the table. And she slowly became conscious that the pattern which the dominoes had taken was formed in a perfect cross. It gleamed and sparkled there—pock-marked with its black dots—stretching its thin white arms to the caressing moon. She continued to stare, and it was as though the table floated away, as though Irela vanished, and there

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was nothing but this strange cross floating before her in the darkness, and on it, with arms outstretched. . . .

She sat up with a jerk. Her hands shot out and destroyed the pattern. There was a high, delicate clatter. The cross was split into many tumbling pieces. She rose to her feet. She said, "And now . . . I must go."

"It's too late."

"Too late? My train doesn't go for another hour?"

"It's already gone!"

"What do you mean?"

"It's midnight."

"But . . . but . . ." Pauline stared wildly through the gloom to the clock on the mantelpiece, at the little watch watch on her wrist. "I don't understand . . . it's . . . you can't mean . . ."

"It's midnight. I altered the clocks."

Pauline, in after-life, remembered this moment as a moment drained of all color—as a black and white episode of Time. It had the stark horror of certain etchings by Goya, where the shadows conspire together, and dart away, leaving a space of untouched paper that seems diffused by an unearthly gleam. Irela sat up, straight, stiff, motionless, and the cold light of the moon gleamed on her ruined face. She was like a weird effigy in stone or wood. She might have been carved, petrified, were it not for the black sparkle in her eyes. Even the shadow which she cast against the wall was as a shadow painted eternally—it stayed there, humped, grey, and crooked, as though it were listening, with an insane delight, to the dialogue which drifted, like a moaning breeze, through the room.

"You've done this to me?"

"I did it for your good."

"How dare you? How dare you?" Pauline's voice rose shrill and distraught. She rushed to the wall and turned on the light.

"I shall go . . . I shall go . . . and I shall never come back!"

OH . . . would that fearful effigy that was pretending to be Irela . . . would it never move again? Would that mouth never move, in anger or in supplication? Would those shoulders be always set, those eyes always stare coldly, malevolently?

"You've tried to possess me . . . to take every bit of me . . . for your own use . . . because you're old, and done for . . . done for! And you want me . . . you want me because I'm young . . . and you do this horrible thing to me. . . ." She swept her hand across her eyes. Her fingers were wet and trembling as she drew them away. "And I loved you. I loved you, really." She looked at the effigy. Oh, why would it not speak, not speak?

She shut her eyes. But as she shut them, she seemed to look into an infinite night, shot with distant lightnings. So she opened them again. She looked to the opposite wall, past Irela, and her voice was calmer, though it had a deeper melancholy.

"I'm sorry. I feel this is a tragedy for both for us. It's a much greater tragedy for you than for me. Because I shall get over it. I didn't mean to say those terrible things. But I think you will agree that I had a reason. . . ."

The clock, with its lying face, taunted her. But she went on:

"I don't want to go without saying 'thank you.' I owe you . . . so much. I'll try to repay it one day. One thing I can never repay. And that is the memory of your voice . . . as long as I live . . . there'll be echoes . . . such lovely echoes . . . in my heart. . . ."

The effigy seemed suddenly to crumple. The whole frame of Irela collapsed. Pauline, turning back in the doorway, saw a black, heaving figure, shapeless in the lamplight. And the room was rent with racking sobs.

Well, at least she had the address. Maison Imbert, Roquebrune. And if the train had gone, and if he had gone with it, despairing of her. . . .

The train had gone. She walked up and down the deserted platform, seeking him. Distant engines clanked, and now and then a shrill whistle tore the night air. The platforms were laced by the black shadows of many swinging lamps. Porters looked at her curiously, wondered whether they should carry her bag, paused, and passed on.

She inquired the next train to the south. There was not a good one till the following afternoon.

She spent the night at a little hotel near the station. She did not sleep. She did not even turn off the light. She stared and stared at the wall-paper, which was decorated with faded green leaves, twirled among sprays of forget-me-nots.

CHAPTER 8

THE train swept into Monte Carlo Station. Pauline got out. She had to carry her bag herself for she was not sure if the few francs that remained to her would even pay for the auto-bus. The bag was not heavy, but after she had passed through the gates into the street, she paused and rested. She felt unspeakably tired.

A grey pall hung over the town. Even when the sun is shining, Monte Carlo is a depressing place. But now, beneath the blanket of cloud, it looked like an empty theatre, with its stalls shrouded in dust sheets. There seemed to be no air at all. Her young lungs felt stifled. And the people who were passing were strangely unreal, like mummies walking. They were so silent, too. They hobbled up the escalier leading towards the Casino, and their sticks and crutches made no sound on the marble steps. Against banks of pink ivy-geraniums, gaunt, fantastic spinsters drifted in silhouette. Old men loomed towards her, glared with fish eyes, and were gone.

Oh, this was a nightmare . . . a nightmare indeed! The madness which had surrounded her in the past few days must surely have sown its seeds in her own brain! With hands that shook violently she opened her bag and took out a powder puff. Her mirror showed her a very white face, with black rings under her eyes. Her hair looked untidy. Her hat was crooked. She powdered her nose, and made up her lips. Then she took a handkerchief and petulantly rubbed the lipstick off again. Her face was so white that the make-up gave her a ghastly appearance. She had no rouge. . . . She had never needed it before. Perhaps she might buy some?

"Mademoiselle desire un taxi?"

She shook her head.

"Ce n'est pas pour le Grand Hotel, mademoiselle?"

Again she shook her head.

"Est-ce que mademoiselle permets que je porte sa valise?"

She stamped her foot hysterically. They went away. Who were they . . . these creatures who persecuted her? Donald! Donald! She cried the name aloud. The sound of her own voice was like a douche of cold water to her nervous system. She realised that she was on the point of breaking down completely. And with that divine common sense which all women show in emergencies—a common sense which she possessed to a remarkable degree—she made a supreme effort to gain control of herself.

She took a deep breath, seized her bag, and walked towards a sign in the distance that sent the message Cafe, in letters of gold, to a thirsty world. How she reached it, she did not know. But after she had sat down for a little while, and had absorbed a large cup of cafe au lait, and nibbled a flimsy brioche, and smoked a cigarette, she felt saner. Or, to be more accurate, she felt less mad. For the grim pall still hung over this city of the dead. And the masses of pink flowers that sprang so artificially around her were funeral flowers. Yes, even the roses that spumed over the marble balustrades, the cinerarias that stiffened themselves in the curiously-shaped beds, and the eternal ivy-geraniums that crawled and crept through every crevice . . . they were all disposed as for the final rites . . . they glowed with the hateful, mocking beauty of those flowers whose doom it is to cast their colored shadows on the graves of ghosts.

She shuddered. She passed her hand over her eyes. A gaunt white waiter hovered over her. She gave him ten francs, took up her bag.

She climbed the hill. A bus was waiting. Did one go to Roquebrune? Yes, said the conductor, one went. The conductor was a consumptive. His face was like a death-mask.

She got in, and the bus lumbered up the street.

A BIG blue Perrier advertisement covers the side of a little villa that stands at the Quatre Chemins where Pauline alighted. It was this that caught her eye first. Then, when the bus rolled on, waving and twisting round the mountain alleys, she stared into an ever-increasing blueness. A blue of sea and sky, divinely radiated with rays of gold. For, in the brief interval of her journey from Monte Carlo to Roquebrune, the sun was coming out, little by little. And the world . . . her world . . . the real world of touch and sound and scent, was coming back.

If only she were not so tired! Yet, even some of the tiredness seemed to leave her as she carried her bag down the winding road that leads towards the sea. For now a breeze was ruffling her hair, and pale shadows danced about her feet. They were friendly shadows, spun by the tangled lemon branches, that beckoned her on, like wise, fluttering fingers. Many were the shadows and generous was the sunlight . . . gold and grey leapt about her . . . but always these proclaimed themselves beneath an immense arch of blue, against an infinite background of blue. And like the echoes of a symphony so this color repeated itself in many riotous details around her, in the pin-point forget-me-nots that sparkled from the hedgerows, in the hairy, drooping anchusas that gleamed against ancient walls, in the exquisite froth of speedwell that formed a humble yet lavish border to the pathway down which her footsteps echoed.

Echoed? Yes . . . the echo pursued her down these painted hills. And with it came many other echoes . . . the thin echo of the violins in Mimi's addio, the turbulent call of the woodwind in Desdemona's grief . . . and the voice of a little boy, piping plaintively through it all. There was a singing in her ears . . . she began to run . . . ah, this music, this music, would it never stop . . . she ran faster. She turned a corner, and below her, over the cliff, she saw a beach, and white, dancing breakers.

"Pauline!"

He was there, coming towards her down the path. And as she fell into his arms, all the echoes seemed to be drowned in the strong, simple song of the distant sea.

(All characters in this novel are fictitious, and have no reference to any living person.)

Printed and published by Sydney Newspapers Ltd., Macdonell House, 331 Pitt Street, Sydney.

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